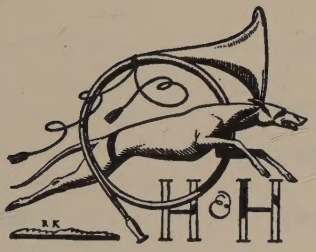
THE HOUND & HORN



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EUGENE O'NEILL

I

AFTER Mr. O'Neill had spent several years travelling about the country with his father, James O'Neill, who was playing in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and a few more bumming all over the world, he fell ill; and while recovering in a sanatorium, decided he wanted to write plays. His first plays, written while he was studying under Professor Baker at Harvard, and working with the young Provincetown Playhouse, are the product of his romantic youth and a desire to write for the stage. They are not complicated by the anxiety about his own soul which gets in his way later, and, more clearly than his later work, they show the real nature of his vocation to the stage. The first published volume, *Thirst*, is now repudiated. Mr. Barrett Clark, whose book[1] on O'Neill contains all the available information about his life and the origins of his plays, says that the plays collected under this title are similar to those in the earliest preserved collection, *Moon of the Caribbees*, though cruder.

The first thing that strikes one on reading the latter collection, is the over-emphatic language. The characters, usually the crew of a tramp steamer, communicate almost entirely in

[1] *Eugene O'Neill, The Man and his Plays*, by Barrett H. Clark, 1929.

profanity. Mr. Clark, who once made the crossing on a cattle-boat, testifies that the dialogue is not inaccurate; but the more educated people in the later plays, while not so profane, also seem to be laboring to express the inexpressible, and achieving a similar flatness. I conclude that the fault is with the dramatist rather than with his material. This conclusion is borne out by the fact that, except in the "atmospheric" play, *Moon of the Caribbees*, the author remains on a level with his characters. We are required to accept people with ineffable sorrows or longings as carrying the main burden of the play. And the plots and situations are built on a similar assumption of a vast emotion which cannot be put into words.

I understand that Mr. O'Neill has never liked *In the Zone*; but it seems to differ from the other plays in the volume we are discussing, chiefly in having a neater and more self-conscious technique. It may be that Mr. O'Neill thinks that this interferes with its sincerity; or it may be that I do him an injustice. The crew of a tramp steamer crossing the submarine-infested zone, is nervously on the watch for spies. What a spy would be doing there is never satisfactorily explained. This does not prevent the men, in search of a scapegoat, from suspecting Smitty. This character is a recurrent figure in the early plays: a melancholy and solitary hobo "of the higher type." Someone discovers him reading a batch of letters one night; they tie him up in spite of his screams, and investigate. But instead of the telegrams from the Kaiser which they expected, they find letters from Smitty's lady-love, who rejected him years ago because he drank. One dried rose falls to the floor. At this sudden revelation of hidden sorrow the rough sailors, whose hearts are really of gold, are abashed and conscience-stricken.

This plot, which, however absurd it may sound in the

telling never fails to move an audience, is really as helplessly bombastic as the language; a language of childish superlatives which are always trying to imply more than they succeed in stating. I take it that the essence of melodrama is to accept emotions uncritically; which, in the writing, amounts to assuming or suggesting emotions that are never realized either in language or action. Melodrama in this sense is a constant quality in Mr. O'Neill's work. It disfigures his middle period, when his feeling for a character is out of all proportion to that character's importance to the play, as well as his later period, when his attempt to deal with his own unattached emotion takes the unhappy form of a passion for some large idea. In fact it seems that Mr. O'Neill typically resorts to the stage, not to represent emotions through which he has already passed; which have been criticized and digested, and so may be arranged in patterns to form works of art: he resorts to the stage to convey a protest, the *first* cry of the wounded human being. His fundamental feeling for the stage, so clearly shown in these first plays, is not that of the artist, but of the melodramatist: the seeker after sensational effect.

Nevertheless his naive belief in emotion is related to a priceless quality, which one may call the histrionic sincerity, the essence of mummery. Every dramatist as well as every actor depends for his power over his audience on his own belief in what he is trying to put on the stage, whether it be an emotion, a character, or a situation. An audience is extremely malleable. It may be swayed by suggestion, hypnotized by the concentration of the stage figure. This complete concentration, which would be wrecked by a wakeful critical faculty or a touch of humor at the wrong time, Mr. O'Neill possesses in a very high degree. It is the secret of his success; and when it is joined to an interest in a character, it produces his best scenes.

II

After Mr. O'Neill had exhausted the vein of mood and atmosphere derived from his early experiences of bumming, he ceased to write melodrama for its own sake, and developed an interest in people he had known or heard about. His next plays begin with an interest in a character or characters. Mr. O'Neill thus explains[2] the origin of *Beyond the Horizon*, the earliest play of this type to be preserved: "I think the real life experience from which the idea of *Beyond the Horizon* sprang was this: On the British tramp steamer on which I made a voyage as ordinary seaman, Buenos Aires to New York, there was a Norwegian A. B., and we became quite good friends. The great sorrow and mistake of his life, he used to grumble, was that as a boy he had left the small paternal farm to run away to sea. He had been at sea twenty years, and had never gone home once in that time . . . Yet he cursed the sea and the life it had led him — affectionately . . . I thought, 'what if he had stayed on the farm, with his instincts? What would have happened?' . . . . And from that point I started to think of a more intellectual, civilized type . . . a man who would have my Norwegian's inborn craving for the sea's unrest, only in him it would be diluted into a vague, intangible wanderlust . . . He would throw away his instinctive dream and accept the thraldom of the farm for — why, for almost any nice, little poetical craving — the romance of sex, say." Though we do not have Mr. O'Neill's account of the origins of most of his plays, I should say, from internal evidences, that *Gold*, *Anna Christie*, *Diff'rent*, *All God's Chillun got Wings*, and perhaps *Desire Under the Elms*, started from a similar interest in a character, which was sometimes real, sometimes partly

[2] Quoted by Barrett Clark.

or entirely imaginary. I shall look at *All God's Chillun* as typical of this group. It shows his most characteristic failings as well as some of his very best results.

The first scene shows Ella, a white girl, and Jim, a sensitive little negro boy, having a childish love affair in their native slum. This scene, unnecessary for the main theme of the play, is typical of O'Neill. Its only possible relevance is as psychological and sociological background, for the important information is duplicated later. I shall have more to say later on about Mr. O'Neill's use of this type of realism. Meanwhile observe that the realism of the dialogue and the natural history of a stage full of children (which, I may say is extremely difficult to do practically), are complicated by a kind of symbolism or super-realism of the set. The scene is a street-corner, one street being full of black faces and negro tunes, the other street full of white faces and *their* tunes. Aside from the sloppiness of leaving so much to the carpenter and the regisseur (which I shall also mention later), it may be doubted whether realism with a super-imposed symbolism of this kind is ever a success. Even Ibsen, with his Wild Ducks and his sea-ladies, has the greatest difficulty in making it seem anything but artificial, and Mr. O'Neill hasn't a tenth of his skill.

Ella falls in with tough companions and gradually degenerates, while Jim painfully acquires education and starts to study Law. Ella, disillusioned with her own kind, marries Jim in a moment of depression, as the only "white" man she knows. There is a good "symbolistic" scene showing the newly married couple emerging from the church between rows of hostile faces, white on one side and black on the other. And then the real drama begins: the struggle in Jim between his love for Ella and his ambition to succeed in the world; the

struggle in Ella between her love for Jim and her hatred of him as the cause of her exile from her own people. The point of conflict is Jim's career: for his self-respect he needs to become a lawyer, while Ella, who has never really accepted Jim as her husband, needs to preserve her spiritual ascendancy by preventing him from passing his examinations. Tied together by their love and by their solitude, they alternately take refuge in each other's arms and fight for mastery or vengeance. The scenes throughout this middle part of the play, in spite of their inadequate language, are deeply convincing. But at the end they both give up: Jim agrees to play a little boy to Ella's little girl. In effect, they cease to strive for an adult relation of husband and wife and accept a childish one.

Now if the previous scenes mean anything, this conclusion marks a degeneration on both their parts. But Mr. O'Neill, under the necessity of ending his play, asks us to accept it as a hard won *Verklärung*:

Jim — Forgive me, God — and make me worthy! . . . Let this fire of burning suffering purify me of selfishness and make me worthy of the child you send me for the woman you take away!

Ella — Don't cry, Jim! You mustn't cry! I've got only a little time left and I want to play. Don't be old Uncle Jim now. Be my little boy . . . Come and play!

Jim — Honey, Honey, I'll play right up to the gates of heaven with you!

What is the reason for this extraordinary failure of Mr. O'Neill's to master his material? Between the untidy and unnecessary first scene and the bathetic and evasive finale, there are several scenes of really tragic significance. Beginning with a person, and proceeding with that complete concentration on the stage figure which I described above, Mr.

O'Neill sometimes sees his people so deeply that they acquire overtones of universal import. One may sometimes feel Jim and Ella, through their excellent concreteness, as every pair of exiles in love, and their story as realizing certain profound truths about the relation between a man, his work, and his wife. But these jewels are so rare, and are imbedded in such a disheartening matrix of psychology, bathos, and cheap symbolism that they seem not only accidental but misunderstood when they appear. And the end finally persuades one that the author wrought better than he knew. He turns away from his tragic vision, and all is lost.

But did he ever have a tragic vision? The finale, so wrong for the middle scenes, is not inconsistent with the characters. The reason it jars is that it belies the point of view from which their struggles were seen as having a dignity and a significance beyond themselves. It might be appropriate in some terrible comedy, but the characters are not seen as in any sense comic figures. In fact, they are not seen "as" anything: if they at times reveal heights and depths, that is an accident, for Mr. O'Neill's relation to them is personal. They are for him friends and enemies, other individuals in an anarchical universe, not parts of any larger vision. He is prepared to echo their cry, "Can such things be?" It is all very well for a character in a play to demonstrate this emotion, but when an author shows it it means that he has not digested his material to the point where it becomes suitable for a work of art. Interested in his people's psychology, yes: hence the filling in of naturalistic background in scene 1; but interested in the esthetic value of their destiny, no: and hence no possible ending for their story. Mr. O'Neill is right when he says,[3] "Life doesn't end, one experience is but the birth of another.

[3] Quoted by Barrett Clark.

Violent death is seldom the solution of anything, in life or in fiction. It is too often a makeshift device . . ." Life doesn't end, but a work of art does; a work of art is a bounded whole, and Mr. O'Neill's unsatisfying endings are a proof that his interest in his people is not the disinterested and final one of the artist, but the developing and tentative one of a man among men.

But Mr. O'Neill's power of convincing an audience is vastly aided by the fact that his belief in his characters is so purely naturalistic. Where there is no publicly established convention, the only way to make a character acceptable is to establish him naturalistically. An audience will believe in a character who used to play on a certain street-corner in Harlem, and whose father was in the coal business, but it will not believe in one who can only be identified by the qualities of his soul, and toward whom it is invited to adopt no personal attitude. The limitations of this type of realism have been admirably studied by Miss Virginia Woolf, in her essay, *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown.* It has this inestimable advantage of being publicly understood, but the most that can be said for it as an art form is that it may, as in this play of Mr. O'Neill's, lead to the accidental discovery of a few muddy diamonds. Mr. O'Neill himself has never been satisfied with it; he has never called himself a realist: we have seen that even in these plays of his middle period he resorts to symbolism. And finally he abandons his interest in character altogether and attempts to enunciate general ideas.

III

Beginning perhaps with *The Hairy Ape*, and continuing through *The Fountain*, *The Great God Brown*, *Marco Millions*, *Lazarus Laughed*, and *Dynamo*, Mr. O'Neill's character studies are interspersed with, and finally superseded by, plays in which the author shows no interest in the concrete, and assumes the role of prophet. It is as though he had ceased to interrogate his acquaintances about what he is to expect of "Life," and had begun to interrogate Nietzsche and other nineteenth-century philosophers. About the prophecies themselves Mr. Clark says the last word: "If O'Neill were a genuinely original thinker, or even a brilliant spokesman for the ideas of a brilliant thinker, we might argue as to whether we should be the losers if he were to give up writing plays altogether, but his ideas as contributions to contemporary thought are negligible; they are at best slightly varied forms of what we have all been reading during the past decade or so." Lazarus' Nietzschean exclamation is typical: "Men are also unimportant! . . . Man remains! Man slowly arises from the past of the race of men that was his tomb of death! For Man death is not! Man, Son of God's Laughter, *is*!" Mr. O'Neill is not a thinker, and we need not attempt to investigate his thought any further. It is true that Lazarus sounds a little like Mr. O'Neill's own fundamental cry, that "life goes on" — implying, perhaps, some confusion between pessimism and the unhappy ending, which would affect his ability to write plays; moreover, it is doubtful whether Lazarus' generalized and rather hysterical optimism could ever be realized in live characters; but the question which concerns us more nearly, in our attempt to understand Mr. O'Neill as a playwright, is not so much the quality of the

thought as the relation between the thought, the author, and the play.

Mr. O'Neill, we find, is more interested in affirming his ideas than in representing the experience in which they are implied. The example of Elizabethan drama seems to prove that an unsatisfying philosophy may underlie a great play. But there the play is the thing, and the philosophy may at most be deduced from it as from a direct experience of life. In *Lazarus Laughed*, on the other hand, there is little or no play at all, for Caligula, the anti-Lazarus, is no more credible than Lazarus himself, and their conflicts fail entirely to move us. The burden of the play is carried by two elements: by Lazarus' philosophical arias, and by spectacular effects of crowd movements and colored lights. About the first of these, enough has been said. With regard to the element of spectacle, Rheinhardt has shown us what can be achieved in this line, especially in his production of Büchner's *Danton*. Gordon Craig[4] has hailed these departures as first steps toward a new form, his hypothetical "pure art of the theatre." As a form, it is related to the 17th Century Masque, and the modern revue. It seems to mean a dissolution of the classic partnership of actor and author, to which we owe most great drama, in favor of a third figure, the regisseur. A good regisseur may of course get artistically satisfying effects with well-trained crowds and carefully calculated light and sound effects — too often at the author's expense. When an author resorts to it, it usually means that he has ceased to be interested in mastering the medium of the stage. This is certainly true in *Lazarus Laughed*: the stage becomes Mr. O'Neill's lifeless megaphone. Nothing stands between the audience and Mr.

[4] *cf.* Hyatt Mayor: *The Ideas of Gordon Craig*, HOUND & HORN, Spring, 1929.

O'Neill, shouting his views. For his relation to his ideas, in these prophetic plays, is the same as his relation to his characters in his middle period: they are emotionally significant to him, they play a part in his equilibrium as a man. Attaining no vision outside himself, his plays remain attached to him by his eternal immaturity.

We are not surprised to find, therefore, that his audience is often more interested in the author than in his play: "It is salvation the agnostic playwright is seeking. One might trace his life like one of those dry southwestern roads where the Penitente Brothers have laid down the dead man they are carrying. O'Neill's plays are crosses. Follow the road he travels and you will often hear the sound of flagellation. Look and you will see that the whip is brought down by a tormented soul on his own back. But flowers grow on this desert track, and the mountains and the sunset lie 'Beyond the Horizon.'"[5] The very imperfection which connects the author with his play also connects the author with his audience. The one quality which his admirers agree in stressing is his sincerity. We have seen that he believes in his own mood in his early plays, and in the personal reality of his characters in his middle period, while in his latest plays he is in earnest in asserting some Nietzschean war-cry. As a person, he is sincerely interested in figuring out his life, and perhaps in attaining a stable point of view — though unconsciously. He has in fact never attained it. He has managed to recognize his emotional demands, but he has not reached the further heroism of accepting what becomes of them: of describing them with reference to some independent reality. He has a sense of human needs, but none of human destiny. He offers us the act of seeking, but no disinterested contemplation;

[5] Elizabeth Shepley Sargent, in *The New Republic*, March 16, 1927.

himself, therefore, rather than his work. Only the dead cease to change; but by discipline it is sometimes possible to produce a work complete and independent of the suffering individual. Mr. O'Neill's failings may all be ascribed to the fact that he has never found any such discipline.

IV

I do not intend, in this essay, to enquire directly to what extent Mr. O'Neill's failure to find a discipline through which to realize his talent is due to his own shortcomings, and to what extent to "conditions" beyond his control. A slight acquaintance with modern drama since Ibsen shows one how difficult it is to write plays of artistic as distinguished from sentimental or sociological interest. But to tackle the general question of Mr. O'Neill as a modern dramatist — and an American — would involve questions which I am not competent to treat. It seems more profitable to compare briefly Mr. O'Neill's career with those of two other American playwrights, Mr. George Kelly and Mr. E. E. Cummings, who followed very different paths to the stage, in the hope that some sense of Mr. O'Neill's place in the contemporary scene may emerge by implication.

Mr. O'Neill began to work about the time of the 1912 Renaissance. He belongs with Mr. Mencken, Mr. Sherwood Anderson, and Mr. Theodore Dreiser (who was in advance of his time). This was the generation that raised the hue and cry about Puritanism. They were, as a group, impatient of tradition and convention, and their great discovery was their emotional needs. They were more interested in a man's emotions than in a map of them; therefore, more interested in

the man than his work. Most of them wrote fiction — a genre which is much better suited to this temperament than the stage; but they also gave birth to the Little Theatre, and Mr. O'Neill, whose first plays were produced by the Provincetown, is in many ways a Little Theatre product. This movement seems never to have had anything more positive than a dissatisfaction with Broadway, and an ambition. It was a revolt against narrow commercialism; it asserted that the theatre was an art; but, having no standards and no technique, it remained somewhat ineffectual in its new freedom.

Mr. George Kelly on the other hand is a product of the commercial, which is also the professional stage. He began as a vaudeville actor[6] and presently he was writing his own skits. He stood behind the scenes with a stop-watch, and if the audience did not laugh soon enough, he rewrote the act. From vaudeville he graduated to the three-act comedy, and finally to the drama. His experience proves that a certain sense of craftsmanship is not incompatible with Broadway, rare though it is there: having set himself the comparatively modest problem of making the *honnête* Babbitts laugh, he was rewarded by the natural discipline which an actual audience and a particular stage can give. Assuming the viewpoint of "commonsense" where O'Neill urges some large idea; accepting the realistic set and the realistic dialogue which he found publicly established, where O'Neill was always making strange demands on the carpenter and the electrician, Mr. Kelly's work was that of the artist: to master and refine a given medium to the point where it can be made to realize his vision. While Mr. O'Neill's freedom has resulted in a complete loss of bearings, so that he has of late almost ceased

[6] A short biography of him appeared in an issue of *Theatre Arts* devoted to American dramatists.

to be a dramatist, Mr. Kelly has bequeathed us several comedies which are complete, and refer to nothing outside themselves. If they are rather trivial, and if there are signs[7] that his home-folks, having moved to more expensive suburbs and learned to drink gin, are no longer to be satisfied with his neat little interiors, the fault is not with his method, which was after all the method of Shakespeare and Moliére. Mr. Kelly seems to have encountered the limitations of the theatre as it exists with us here and now. It is doubtful whether a method, which depends upon an acceptance of the existing theatre, would ever prove the solution for a man of Mr. O'Neill's potential dimensions.

If the Little Theatre, in its revolt against commercialism, forfeited incidentally the discipline of the craftsman which a Kelly could work out for himself on Broadway, it never showed the slightest tendency to develop its own standards and its own conventions. A play with a "kick" has remained its ideal. We have seen that the personality of the author or the agony of some unassimilated "character" can satisfy its cravings for drama better than a formal and autonomous play.

Mr. E. E. Cummings, however, was a poet before he tried to write for the stage. That is to say, he had trained himself — with what success I shall not attempt to say: his method rather than his results concern us here — to see his material as an artist. His play, *Him*, is evidently more "autobiographical" than any of O'Neill's and yet the characters at least of Him and Me are acceptable as parts of the pattern of the play without reference to the author. Without trying to judge the merit of the play as a whole, I should say that the scenes between Him and Me have all the qualities we have failed

[7] *Behold the Bridegroom*, the latest play, about Long Island, was a failure commercially.

to find in Mr. O'Neill's work. The characters, the rhythm, and the sense of the stage are all of a piece, whereas in Mr. O'Neill's plays we find realistic dialogue, symbolistic settings, and characters which are unamenable to any pattern or underlying rhythm. In a real writer for the stage, language, character, and the sound and movement of the stage, spring from the same root conception. A Moliére dialogue implies the stage empty save for a few spectators, a little furniture, and the actors; it implies a rhythm derived from the pantomime of the Commoedia dell'Arta,[8] and a certain relation between actor and audience. A Cummings' dialogue implies a brief light interval between "blackouts," a certain rhythm derived from the vaudeville act, and an audience which good-humoredly challenges the performer to "put his stuff across." Mr. Cummings' work, in fact, has style. His solitary discipline has enabled him to work in stage terms, disinterestedly, and with a mastery which Mr. O'Neill, for all his experience, has never attained.

But Mr. Cummings, unlike Mr. Kelly, is an artist of the theatre without either theatre or audience. I have said that his style was derived from vaudeville, but no vaudeville actor could manage a speech of Him's and no vaudeville audience could understand his play. In spite of his very authentic feeling for the stage, and in spite of his ingenious and courageous effort to dramatize his very lack of connection with a live stage and audience (so neatly of a piece with the "stunt" feeling of his vaudeville style), Mr. Cummings' first play remains mere closet drama. It was in fact produced at Mr. O'Neill's native theatre; but the Provincetown's crowd of Greenwich Villagers, just the thing to relish a revival of *In the Zone* and *Moon of the Caribbees*, were at a loss to deal

[8] *Cf.* M. Ramon Fernandez' *Moliére*, in the series *La Vie Des Hommes Illustres.*

with *Him*. Mr. Cummings does not belong at the Provincetown. So far he does not seem to belong anywhere. But Mr. O'Neill indubitably belongs at the Provincetown, at the Guild, in the suburbs of London, in Berlin, and in Little Theatres all over the English-speaking world. The man O'Neill is very close to a vast audience.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

THE LITURGY OF SMALL SUSAN

'and seyde: O deerë child, I halsë thee,
In vertu of the Hooly Trinitee,
Tell me what is thy causë for to syngë
Sith that thy throte is kut, to my semyngë?'

Small Susan clutching at Azraël's lapel —
She died rapidly. We felt
Sorry in unison. The gent with the beard
Precisely dropped a lovely tear;
Mother crossed herself, and Pa
Staggered down the stairs to crank the car.

℣ It was very affecting.
℟ We were moved, all of us.

Death like a darling mannered cat
Sedately pounced on Susan's back.
Death is cleanlier at Sea:
Susan's hue is sub-marine.
Death is handsomer in youth:
How natural Small Susan looks!

℣ Will you take lemon or an onion.
℟ Profoundly.

Who shall weave her seamless shroud?
Who depart the crape around?
Who shall knoll a careful knell?
Who shall delve her house? who shall
Pale her down lest the vampire come?
'Done' quoth the beard; and it was done.

℣ Some of them are my very best friends.
℟ Did you have an easy decease?

Who'll troll a stave for her epicede?
Who'll versify Small Susan's threne?
Who'll thole her tholing? who'll compound
Her meed in strophic trentals loud?
Who'll cheat the lyre of a deathsong?
'Sung' quoth the beard; and it was sung.

℣ I sometimes think it's best we don't know.
℟ Did you speak?

'Small Susan died last night. O loss
'Irreparable at any cost!
'Smiling she died, and, dead, she smiles
'In diminishing fragments. Crisply filed
'Away with worms, her corruptible clay
'Enriches our lawns till the Judgment Day.'

℣ We all come to it, sooner or later.
℟ She stains the time past, lights the time to come.

'What song the Syrens sang, What name
'Achilles bore, What fretted place
'Trist Orpheus calmed, What harbouring
'Orestes found at last, What wind
'Streaks thin the wail of damnèd wights:
'She knows, and, knowing, comfort finds.'

℣ I tore her tattered ensign down.
℟ It was married chastity.

'Small Susan died. Who mourn for her,
'Commit her name to the plangent air.
'Bespeak the ouzel and the wren,
'The halcyon and ptarmigan:
'These the undersong divide,
'And shrill her planh along the sky.'

℣ One can be too careful.
℟ And one clear call for me.

The altarboy gapes adenoids, and
Father Considine can't bend
Downward from the loins, or up-
Ward from the loins: the Mass is a jape,
The bread is leaven! the chalice dusty!
She rests in peace, gents; don't be fussy.

℣ I'm sure it's the better way.
℟ All we like sheep.

The beard is wet, and wags amain.
Father Considine displays
Fulgid the theophagic Host.
Mass is said. Her soul's at rest.
Gentles, your prayers to ease the way:
Small Susan shinnies Peter's gate.

℣ Even calico elephants remember.
℟ A novel situation, this.

O carefull Verse! her light is gutted—
(Acridly, teeth on edge, prevent her)
O heavie Herse! her path's be-nighted—
(Portal of lead: and enter, enter,
All my love!)—Sweet whoreson Death,
Ev'n now I top her in your bed!

℣ The street is dark, I shall stumble.
℟ Sirs, in my heart there was a kind of fighting.

DUDLEY FITTS

THE PATRIOT

WHEN it got too dark to read, the old man with the grizzled beard laid his book on the window-sill — it was *The Republic* of Plato — and took up the fruit jar of corn liquor.

The room was dark, dusty, cavernous. The fading fringe of orange light that slipped through the tattered curtains and lost itself in the black marble mantel, dimly disclosed a chaos of old furniture, bottles, and books.

The door flew open so violently that it banged against the wall.

A negro stumbled in hatless, sweating, trembling. He fell on his knees and begged the old man to hide him. He had, he said, killed a country storekeeper in a fight over some tobacco. He had been put in jail. A mob had taken him out to lynch him. In the woods he had escaped and run a long way. He was afraid now that the mob would find him and finish its work.

The old man called. A mulatto boy answered.

"Take this note to town and give it to the Sheriff." He wrote: "A man here has killed another. Come and get him." He signed it, "Hugh Clark."

He went back to the window and picking up the fruit jar unscrewed the top. He heard an automobile stop in the road beyond the hedge. The negro trembled visibly. Hugh Clark put down the fruit jar. From the shadows of the room he produced a pistol, antique, rusty and apparently useless.

"Go upstairs," he ordered, "and hide under that pile of fodder in the hall." The negro bounded up the spiral staircase.

Clark threw open the front door and stepped out on the porch.

He peered sharply into the thicket that had grown up in front of the house, where long ago a terraced lawn had stretched its green smoothness. He saw no mob, but only two men and a woman walking up the path. It was strange to have visitors. They walked slowly, gazing at the old mansion. It stood on the crest of the rising ground, far from the road, strongly and simply proportioned. Gray it was and, on close view, dilapidated; nevertheless, the symmetry and dignity of its colonial architecture were unimpaired.

This place had belonged to the Clark family for many generations. Hugh had been there for some thirty years, alone except for two or three negro families that lived in the cabins that squatted near.

The two men who came up the path were unfamiliar to Clark, but the woman — her walk, her mauve dress, the lift of her arm as she pointed out something to the young man — he knew her.

At first she did not recognize him. He had changed so much. Thirty years can be a long time. She thought, it would have been better not to have come.

Then she cried, "Oh, Hugh!" and taking his hands in hers turned to the men with her. "This is my son, Christopher," she said, "and this is my husband, Aubrey, Aubrey Holladay."

A little later, when Aubrey and Chris started to look around the house and grounds before it got too dark to see, Serena — that was her name — said:

"Wait, Hugh, I want to have a talk with you."

They sat on the wide steps of the porch — Beauty and the Beast. The amber air was warm and still. The distant woods were like a tapestry woven of many hued greens. On a little

hill far off to the right lay a farmhouse, like a mouse, in the center of a vivid pool of wheat, surrounded by the coffee-colored stalks of last year's cotton patch. Over the wheat field floated the dim pink cloud of a peach tree in bloom.

The woman laid her hand on the man's arm and said softly: "My dear . . ."

"You have been gone a long time," he answered.

"Yes, a long time and a long way."

Her husband, Aubrey Holladay, was one of those Southerners who had left the South of Reconstruction times, gone North and become rich. He and his wife had lived out West, in New York, and, intermittently, in Europe.

She spoke impulsively. "I had to leave, Hugh. Did you blame me — you didn't, did you? You know I loved you — never anyone else . . . But I was withering up here. That's why I ran away. I had a dread of being tied down here . . . fixed, fastened in this country. You know? I hated it . . . poverty . . . heat . . . niggers . . . dullness."

She looked at him, an old man now, much older than he should be, old and worn, wrinkled and ragged.

She thought: I knew it. I knew it would be this way with him . . . too impatient, too impractical. How could he expect people to listen to him and his ideas.

"Of course," he answered. "I never blamed you. You were sensible."

He glanced at her. She was still beautiful, still charming, with her eyebrows wide apart as in the lovely marble Aphrodites, the soft brown eyelids low over the deep blue resourceful eyes, the sweetly determined chin and the lips that had always asked and taken the pleasant things of life. Her little hat hid the graying hair but not the jade earrings.

She had always loved money, pretty things, admiration —

and, he thought, deserved them. If he had married her, how could he have given them, how could she have secured them, in the South of thirty years ago?

He thought of himself as he was then, a few years out of college, a teacher of Greek and of history, believing that through his teaching and talking and writing he could make the gracious ideals of the ancient Grecian civilization sweep like a flood of light over the turbulent, prejudiced, passionate South of his younger days.

She asked as a child might have questioned:

"Why didn't you run away, too?"

It was now the time of day that is known in the language of the countryside as "dusty dark." The oaks and elms deepened from pale to olive green, and the cedars and pines to black. The sky was a dull, blank gray, and a gray light sifted like ashes down over the land. The jagged branches of a lightning-blasted oak stood sharp against the sky, as if cut out of night itself and pasted on it.

He said, "Well, I don't know."

He sat there thinking, staring out under his eyebrows, his knee drawn up and his chin resting on his fist. He was thinking of all the things in this country of his that he had once so ardently fought and always so bitterly hated . . . poverty . . . ignorance . . . virulent intolerance . . . masked violence.

He stopped thinking and listened. She had been talking, but he had not heard her.

"I forgot to tell you," she continued, "Chris is an architect. He's a good one already. Has been doing well in New York. But now he wants, of all things, to locate down here. He keeps talking about the South, its growth, the opportunities for development. Hugh, won't you tell him how foolish it is?"

But the old man was thinking of himself and his relation

to this land. This love of country . . . patriotism . . . how curious! "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori." . . . Take the South after the Civil War. Why should anybody with means of locomotion have stayed in it? And yet, all the fine people, the finest, that did stick by it! He thought of his father killed in battle fighting for the Confederacy . . . of his mother in the Reconstruction South . . . of all the gallant and honorable men and women who had so freely given to this much-loved country all of themselves, "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor." And he felt that he had always been bound by bonds invisible but secure.

"I couldn't have lived out of it," he said, "any more than you could have lived in it."

Dusty-dark was giving way to the robin's-egg blue of the end of twilight. It was as if the opaque gray sky had been drawn up silently, like a curtain, leaving nothing between earth and heaven but the tenderly crystalline, vivid, infinite blue. The blue deepened around the slim new moon in the western sky. Blue night, thought the old man, this must be that vision of perfect beauty which Socrates saw that evening on his way to the banquet.

Serena laid her finger-tips on the man's shoulders caressingly.

"Do you remember," she asked softly, "the last night that I was here?"

He remembered. A night in May. Such a night as ought never to have happened in those Victorian days. He had not even yet forgotten the soft warm darkness, the shadows of the magnolia leaves outlined by the mooonlight on the wall, dancing to some unheard music, the warm, snowy blossoms of the cape jessamine . . . the moonlight white on her throat and purple on her hair . . . the sweetness of her lips . . . the

pressure of her arms.

He said, "I remember."

She frowned a little, as if in doubt about something, then spoke hurriedly. "There's something I ought to tell you — should have told you long ago, perhaps. Chris, my son, is not — he is not my husband's — not Aubrey's — son."

She hesitated and Hugh looked up at her in astonished silence.

"He is your son," she said.

His son!

He arose abruptly and went into the house. The oil lamp was lit in his room. Aubrey Holladay and Chris were there. He looked keenly at his new-found son. There was a resemblance. The same long, loose-jointed body, and that same trick of walking up and down with long strides and stuttering when excited, as just then when he was arguing with Aubrey, and the same way of thrusting his fingers through his hair until it stood wildly upright.

Serena called Aubrey out on the porch.

Hugh Clark, alone with his son, wondered what this young fellow would think of him. He could think of nothing to say.

Chris was turning over the books that were scattered everywhere. He would like to borrow, if he weren't presuming too much on such short acquaintance, this one, Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier.*

Yes, Mr. Clark was delighted to let him have it — a charming picture of the brilliant Florentine Renaissance. Mr. Holladay was an architect and intended to locate in the South?

Exactly. Very shortly. The South was the place. It was settled. The final argument had taken place a few minutes ago. He would come South. What would he design? Schoolhouses, bridges, public buildings, among other things.

Mr. Clark would be glad to see some of his plans, blue prints, if he would come again soon. Really? Of course.

When Serena and Aubrey came back, they found the young man and the old one leaning together over the table. Chris was sketching on the flyleaf of the *Book of the Courtier* the plan of a schoolhouse that he would put up some day in the South.

They left.

The old man was alone again, but not lonely. His heart was light. He felt himself linked to life again. What was that phrase — from *The Tale of Two Cities*, wasn't it? — that his mind kept groping for? Restored to life? No. "Recalled to Life!" The struggle with ignorance, poverty, ugliness was not over yet. His son, better equipped and with a mind more practical than his own, would succeed where he had failed. Perhaps from out of the bitterness of his own experience he might advise and help him. He saw great powerful buildings rising up under his son's hand. He saw the sanity and freedom and beauty of his old Greek world passing insensibly into his South over the long white curves of the mighty concrete bridges that his boy would build.

He looked into the night, over the woods and the fields sleeping under the inky blue sky and across the hills where the town tinged the skyline with a faint flush. *Recalled to life!*

He sat there for an hour, maybe two.

Then he caught sight of a dim figure dodging behind the trees to the left of the house. With a start, he remembered the negro who had come to him that evening for protection.

So, the house was watched. Would there be a mob and would they attempt to search the house. Well, if so, there would be trouble.

He did not like the affair. Yesterday he would have wel-

comed such an opportunity for a fight, yesterday he put no value on life. But now that his son had come and lighted again within him the love of life, he felt a strange desire to avoid danger.

He called his old servant. "Tell the nigger upstairs he'll have to get out," he ordered. But as his servant started up the creaking spiral staircase, old Hugh took a second thought: "If the nigger goes out now he'll probably be killed. He came to me for protection — a human being — came to this house. Was anybody ever turned out of this house because the owner was a coward?"

"Come back," he called to the old servant. "Let him stay."

He went into the house and got his pistol again.

When he came back to the porch he heard someone walking up the path toward the house.

He pointed the pistol at the figure indistinct in the darkness. "Stop! Stop, or I'll fire!"

"Hello, what's up?" It was his son's voice. The pistol sank down. "I came to bring you some of those blue prints of mine to look over and tell me what you think of them." The young man entered the strip of light that stretched from the hall door across the porch and into the night a little way.

The old man trembled. He had come close to shooting the boy.

"You'll have to go back," he commanded harshly. "Right away. I'm busy."

As his son, offended, turned to go, fear seized old Hugh, fear that his son might be mistaken in the darkness for the fugitive and shot.

"Wait," he pleaded. "Go in my room and wait for me there."

Surprised at the insistence of his voice, Chris went in.

An automobile came speeding along the bumpy road half screened by the thicket from the house. Its brakes screeched; its light went off; its motor was silenced. Then another stopped — and another — and another . . . The old man lost count of them.

He heard stumbling footsteps and whispered curses and saw a fitful flashlight on the path. There must have been forty or fifty men, keeping close together, with handerchiefs masking the lower parts of their faces.

One of them stepped forward. "Stand aside," he commanded. "We are going to search this house."

Old Hugh cocked his antiquated pistol.

"I'll shoot the first one of you," he said almost gently, "that puts his foot on these steps."

His son appeared in the doorway. "Here, what's all the racket?" he asked, stepping out on the porch in the light from the hall.

The old man jumped in front of his son. "Stay behind me," he begged. "For God's sake, go back — go back in the house."

He stretched out his left arm to hold his son behind him.

The leader of the men below fell back a step at this sudden movement. Something flashed in his hand. He fired. His shot was low.

"Thank God I am in front," thought Clark. He pulled the trigger of his pistol. It snapped.

Something fell behind him. He turned. It was his son. The bullet from the leader of the mob below had struck the stone pedestal of a porch column and ricochetting had missed the old man and hit his son in the temple. The blood was streaming from the wound. Hugh knelt by the boy.

The young fellow's breath was already coming in labored, raucous gasps. The men on the ground heard it. They had

killed a white man. This was something serious. They withdrew and disappeared quickly.

The boy's breathing ceased.

The old man got up from his knees painfully. He wiped his bloody hands on his trousers. There was a tight feeling across the bridge of his nose, his eyes burned and the corners of his mouth twitched uncontrollably.

He walked to the door, as if asleep, and stood there for a long time, staring at something — a dirt-dauber's nest in the paneled door — but without seeing it.

After standing perfectly still for several minutes, he suddenly strode into the house. Walking straight to the window of his room, he took from the window-sill the fruit jar and held it up to the light. It held nearly a quart of colorless corn whiskey. He turned it up to his mouth and took a long steady drink. The fiery liquor seemed to soothe the dull, tired ache of his body. Scraps of verse were running senselessly around in his brain, around and around.

Stepping over to his bed, he picked up a book that lay upon it, turned the pages carefully, stopped, read one page slowly, tore off part of it and, holding it in his hand, went on the porch. Kneeling by the body of his son, he placed the scrap of paper on the boy's forehead, gently gluing it on with the blood.

Then he staggered back into the house and sank down in his chair by the window. His heart pained him and he drew his breath with difficulty.

He reached for the fruit jar and drank again and again, like a tired horse at a brook. The floor of the room tipped gently and he felt himself sinking down — down — down — softly into nothingness. The empty jar fell from his hand and broke on the floor without disturbing him.

When the sheriff and his deputy arrived the next morning, they found old Hugh slumped down in his chair, oblivious of the flies that swarmed upon his face. They also found the body of a young stranger on the porch.

The circumstances caused the sheriff to think it probable that Clark had killed the young fellow.

"Arrest him and bring him along," he said.

The deputy bent over the old man.

"I can't," he answered. "He's dead."

They went on the porch. The scrap of paper was still sticking to the forehead of the young man. The Sheriff tried to read it but finally gave it up as a mystery. It was printed in Greek.

He suspected that it was a curse the old man had put on the boy.

But when it was translated, it turned out to be only some poetry from that part of the Iliad in which Helen is watching the battle from the walls of Troy and wondering where two of her kinsmen are:

> "'Two, two only remain whom I see not among
> the commanders . . .
> Dare they not enter the fight or stand in the
> council of heroes?'
> So said she. They long since in Earth's soft
> arms were reposing,
> There, in their own dear land, their Father-
> land, Lacedaemon."

WILLIAM POLK

PICASSO'S METHOD

THIS article is an attempt to describe Picasso's method and to consider its usefulness for an artist of today. So far as I know this has not been attempted in any of the innumerable studies that his work has provoked. Anyone who wants penetrating, though scattered, remarks on him, should look through Guillaume Apollinaire. By far the most detailed biography is in André Level's "Picasso" (1928). The most comprehensive collection of the drawings is in Waldemar George.

"Les peintres espagnols sont plutôt contrastés que coloristes." Baudelaire's remark applies to more than the mere pigment on the canvas. Picasso is the most Spanish of painters in this respect, if in no other, for no artist has ever proceeded more startlingly by contrasts. An exhibition of his work looks like a gathering of paintings by artists of every modern tendency, and with nothing in common but mastery of their several styles. He has, to be sure, originated none of the new departures of painting in the last twenty years (de Chirico, for instance, was already "neo-classic" by 1908), but he has thrown more weight than any other painter into the final direction which each new departure has taken. It is difficult, but possible to group his work into some three periods, although one must always allow for plentiful throwbacks and forerunners. When he came to Paris in 1900, he had already received a sound training in painting from his father and from the Spanish art schools. His first efforts in France were some Toulouse-Lautrec subjects, painted with almost the richness of Renoir. He has never since used paint with such

relish for the medium. Young as he was — only nineteen or twenty — he was already an artist through and through, a transmuter, and never, like Lautrec, a naive eye-witness to horrors. (Behind every Lautrec stands the boulevardier testifying: "This I saw with my own eyes.")

Picasso stretched out into his first long strides about nineteen-five and six. A stranger far from home, he painted, with blues from the farthest horizons, the abandonment of exiles. "Ces enfants qu'on n'embrasse pas comprennent tant! . . . Ces femmes qu'on n'aime plus se rapellent," as Apollinaire said. These girlish mothers with the sharp masks of consumptives, these skeletal harlequins whose rained-on tights constrict their arm bones, these rickety children that lag behind and can hardly stand for hunger — in them life has abandoned its outworks and smoulders profoundly down their eyes, as it does in animals when they lie dying and cannot understand why. The outline that traces their scantiness trembles like a tear. Only a Spaniard could melt with so profound a pity, and only a Spaniard could turn as callous as the man Picasso next became.

Picasso always has good reason for his transformations. He must have seen that his early study of Puvis and Gauguin had made his surfaces too flat and empty, so he looked to Cézanne for a way of breaking up planes and suggesting solids. He may have felt that his effusions of pity might turn lachrymose, like the "divino Morales," and so went for an antidote to the horror and humour of African masks. And then his uncanny prescience probably flaired, in 1907 or so, the jangled nerves of after the war. For some five years his approach was deliberate, though bold, until he evolved as the cubist of the cubists. Cubism is as headstrong as an engine; only Picasso had the strength to deflect it into human uses.

A cubist portrait, for instance, is a problem as intractable as recognizing Yorick by his skull, or recognizing oneself from one's unconscious. Picasso was the only cubist who accomplished this, in his portrait of Ambroise Vollard, and others. In his hands alone Cubism was brought to serve the intelligent emotions. Many cubist paintings were made to be hung upside down or from any corner, as though they were cretonne pillows. Picasso experimented with this also, but it did not satisfy his ambitions: he wanted juxtapositions that were organized by intelligence, not by mere color sensation alone. He examined the stuffed plush of the Second Empire, its fringed fauteuils, its grained false woodwork, and the mediocrity they housed, dissected these elements like a coroner at an autopsy, then fractured them up in terrorem, and the result jeered like cogs and pistons screeching. The process of the wrecking exhilarates one as tensely as the wrecked result desolates. Milhaud has also caught this feeling in "Le Boeuf sur le Toit" by the breakage of similar banalities (heart-sob songs, the relentless alacrity of pianolas). After being, perhaps, too human, Picasso had dehumanized himself, and not even Hieronymus Bosch ever distorted more bitterly. A cubist painting by Picasso baffles and exasperates until one has started the clue to its interpretation; then one is more than repayed by the excitement of initiation into its wit. The judging intelligence that governs the dislocation and reorganization of some of these paintings makes Picasso classic. He has not yet done with cubism but keeps it by to wrestle with when things may seem too easy.

Picasso was abandoning his "post war" mood even before the war had ended. Just as he had anticipated that chaos by a number of years, so he also anticipated the present reorganization, the new classicism that is now busying the freshest

minds. This is the most difficult transformation of his to describe, because the rest of us are only in the beginnings of the movement. He seems to have dropped painting, which he had treated with less and less respect, and to be devoting himself to line drawing. Superficially, these drawings look as clear as Flaxman, but the intention behind them baffles one as much as the intention behind "Apollon Musagète." One thing is certain, that after going as far as possible to fracture his world, Picasso is now labouring to re-mould it on the firmness of the antique. The surfaces of these drawings are no longer broken into planes; they are not even troubled with shadows, but a line so subtle that it can pretend to be gauche, a line whose elisions have preconsidered *everything*, whips around white paper and infers bodies in action: groups of amazons and athletes, where attack encounters defense, and thrust parries thrust. This interaction is but natural, for Picasso is now a force whose effort calls up instant comments out of the ends of the earth. It is a long time since he was a solitary Spaniard in Paris, painting exiles from hope that shun each other.

Picasso's career recalls Mantegna's: a painter developing towards sculpture. Both Picasso and Mantegna have felt the bitterness of pushing against the doors to the past. Mantegna struggled to recreate antiquity intact (but the wounds of Christ were on him). Picasso achieves a similar bleakness in his jibes at Second Empire apings of Rome. Both men are St. Sebastians bound against ruins, and abandoned by their very executioners. Mantegna's ruins were consolingly genuine, but Picasso's are sham and plaster. Cocteau has an interesting remark in this reference: "Tragedy no longer consists in painting a tiger swallowing a horse, but in establishing plastic relations between a chair moulding and a tumbler that

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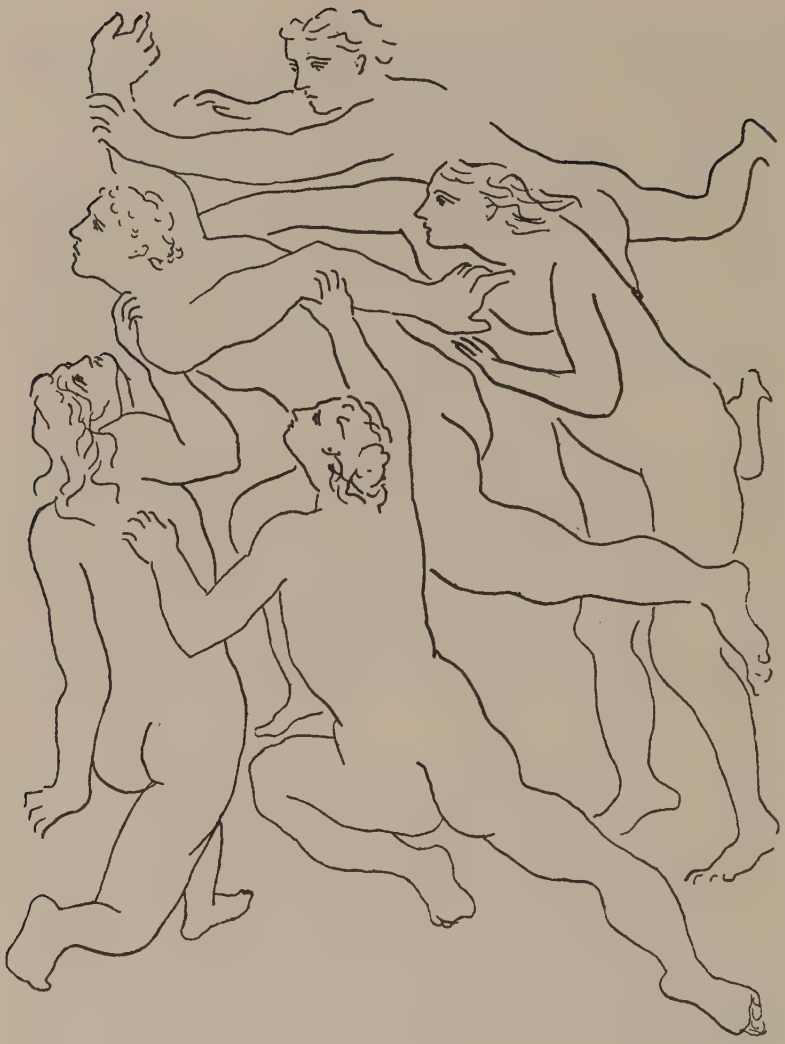
can move me without the help of any anecdote."[1] Often (as in the still life with the plaster casts, here reproduced) Picasso leaves out St. Sebastian and conveys his agony through the ruins alone.

It may be that this latest Picasso is really less classic than the cubist Picasso: classic in the new sense of relevant and contemporary material organized under the firm presidency of a judgment. This new Picasso, while more matured than before, seems less relevant to the present. But perhaps he has once again projected his relevance into the future, as he did when he turned cubist before the war?

* * * * * *

Picasso is by no means the only Proteus among modern artists. One thinks at once of Ezra Pound and Stravinsky. All three have been helped along their careers of successive eclecticism by their eclectic national traditions of painting, poetry or music. Picasso's contrasts might not surprise us so much if we bore in mind what diverse characters Spain has already produced from her allegiance to a faith at odds with her adherence to experience — and to what a diverse experience, Christian, Moorish. St. Theresa's pitifulness and Quevedo's callousness lived side by side in Cervantes and again in Goya. It may be added that in Russia a similar clash of East and West has formed similar combinations of opposites. Contrast, and a certain vernacular austerity, are the only Spanish traits to be felt in Picasso's work. Regional pieties were rubbed off him by a childhood divided among Malaga, Coruña and Barcelona, towns more different from each other than Madrid is from Rome. Then his mother, under whose name he paints, was Italian; and since 1900 he has lived

[1] "La tragédie ne consiste plus à peindre un tigre qui mange un cheval, mais à établir entre un verre et une moulure de fauteuil des rapports plastiques capables de m'émouvoir sans l'intervention d'aucune anecdote."



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almost entirely in Paris, so that the Picasso of today is Latin, nothing outside the Latin tradition, but everything in it. One feels this in his costumes for the ballet "El Sombrero de tres Picos," where his peasants do not have the air of any particular province of Spain, but are Mediterranean.

Picasso's eclecticism differs from the older kind in not trying to fuse the best elements of several schools into one supreme style, as did Phidias or Rubens. Picasso gives himself up completely to each style in succession, not mixing it with any former style. Rubens is a pancratiast, but Picasso contests each event of his pentathlon separately. He allows nothing to carry over from one contest to the next except a gain in agility. He plans each next contest to correct each present weakness. After all, the Tuscan, the Castilian of beauty is the language of God, and our tongues of flesh can master nothing better than various dialects debased from that central and secret source. Picasso proceeds like a philologist who would approach the lost Aryan language by following up Teutonic, Greek and Sanscrit roots toward their obliterated convergence. He is like a surveyor who sights the angle of elevation of an inaccessible summit from points as far apart as he can travel to (Toulouse-Lautrec and the Byzantines, Congo dance masks and Puvis de Chavannes). He has never allowed a lack of antithesis to paralyze him into one irrevocable attitude, as Canova did.

This discipline has enabled Picasso to play on an increasingly rich historical reference and to catch in one flash the facets of all the Greco-Latin past. Nowadays he will not draw a Greek god, nor even the Roman copy of the Greek god, nor yet the eighteenth-century engraving after the Roman copy, but he will draw the Second Empire plaster cast that copies the eighteenth-century engraving. Picasso's drawing

Ca. 1926

Pablo Picasso

will then send an alert mind careering back through all the Greco-Roman tradition: one will first see that the drawing is by Picasso, one will then be reminded of Napoleon the Third, of Piranesi and his time, of the Antonines, and finally of Polycleitos and his fellows. In precisely the same way an informed Christian, on noticing a little shrub in flames sculptured in a corner of Chartres, will be set to thinking of Moses and his vision of the angel in the burning bush, of Mary's virginity miraculously unconsumed, of her body, like the flames that enshrine the angel, enshrining the Salvation of the world forever. History has to a certain extent taken the place of religion for wide and extra-personal reference. The links that a few, nowadays, are able to forge with the past are our poor makeshift for the great links that once had power to hale us up all into the eternity of Abraham's bosom.

But Picasso has another reason for his museum haunting and his "imitations," in the vaudeville sense. Raymond Cognat, writing about Picasso's designs for the circus ballet "Parade," thus sums up the ambitions of the artists toward the end of the war: "The circus embodied the aspirations of the young men of this time. It was almost their symbol. The importance of terseness and controlled emphasis to the circus, the direct emotions it calls up and the way each actor, to be noticed, must put himself over on well-known and almost hieratic gags, all this attracted these men, who were seeking to give a new discipline to art and to impose strict laws without relinquishing their own fancies."[2] When Picasso or

[2] "Les jeunes hommes de cette époche considèrerent le cirque comme une des expressions les plus exactes de leurs aspirations, presque comme leur symbole. Tout ce qu'il comporte d'essentiel, d'ordonné, les émotions directes qu'il provoque, la nécessité pour chaque acteur, s'il veut être remarqué, de faire preuve de personnalité sur des thèmes connus et à peu près invariables, devaient attirer ces hommes, qui pensaient donner une nouvelle discipline à l'art, lui imposer des règles strictes, sans pourtant renoncer à la fantaisie."

Stravinsky or Milhaud perform upon some worn old theme, it is to spare us the embarrassment of serving up their hearts all raw, and to concentrate our delight on their performance. The more banal the theme, the freer we are to relish the wit they sauce it with. The danger of this is that art may become a routine of juggling. Picasso's electric contact with experience keeps him from being an empty handed juggler. He continues really to surprise us with his art because he is himself perpetually surprised by experience. His slight themes do not make slight works because his focus is so acute. And his integrity has saved him from chic: he creates a taste but refuses to supply it when it has spread into a fashion, for by then he has moved on, and nothing will bribe him to tread his old paths again.

Picasso goes about seeking an angel to wrestle with, for he mistrusts nothing so much as that Alexandrine perplexity that follows when all difficulties have been allowed to yield themselves. When he can discover no change for the better, he boldly changes for the worse, for he is by profession a precursor, one of those "qui partent pour partir." This accounts for many experiments (pictures made of pasted newspaper clippings, etc.) that would seem deplorable if one did not realize that they are the waste places on his route into real discoveries. It is indeed a miracle to achieve experiments as diverse as Leonardo's, and all confined to artistic creation. This restlessness is heroic in Picasso because, had he allowed his bent of nature to run away with him (he, the infant prodigy of the art schools, who used to do a month's problem in a day) he could have floated into popularity, like Raphael, on fluent and overflowing productions. Yet still the danger of facility keeps growing with the very precautions he takes against that danger.

This successive eclecticism of Picasso, Pound, Stravinsky, and Milhaud has much to be said against it if the case is stated generally: for any artist at any time. Our time, however, has no one tradition strong enough to compel a focus on all of us. The barriers are down, and our eye ranges every which way over accumulations of ruin. One dead direction looks as good as another. Yet stick to one, and you die, as Paul Manship has died: the artist must keep changing to keep alive. The uncertainty, which direction to choose, paralyses most men with hesitations, but it has proved Picasso's most powerful motor. He flings himself into each new course as though that alone were worth his faith. This Cartesian second sight and pounce makes an art whose agility is strangely light: "like a feather on the back of my hand." Man can never become an instantaneous angel, but effort toward that end would seem to be the best way of keeping one's naiveté fresh, granted our present conditions.

A painter's future reputation is impossible to forecast, yet it would seem safe to say that Picasso will never take a place among the accepted celebrities, double starred in Baedecker, but among those artists who never cease to be excitedly re-examined by a few — not with Raphael, but with Piero della Francesca and Jacopo della Quercia.

Those critics who reject Picasso because he "lacks personality" are confused about the role that personality plays in artistic creation. They confuse the personality of the artist with the personality of the man. While the artist is creating, he must have absolute control over the man; all the man must be available for transmutation, but none must be in the way. Often, however, the man, burdened with troubles, trespasses on the artist and distracts him from his creating, as seems to have happened to Beethoven. The rarer and more blessed

artists are they who cast off their humanity for the work at hand, who possess the kind of personality that a mathematician displays in seeking out his problems and solving them, a personality that can only be defined as the quality of the clarity under which each artistic project is resolved. Bach was one of these, whose life was one long adventure of losing himself to find himself, in French dance forms, Dutch organ music, Italian concerti. Picasso is another such, and his taste for risks, the heroism of his restless renunciations compose one of the most striking personalities among modern artists, however little they may reveal of him as a man.

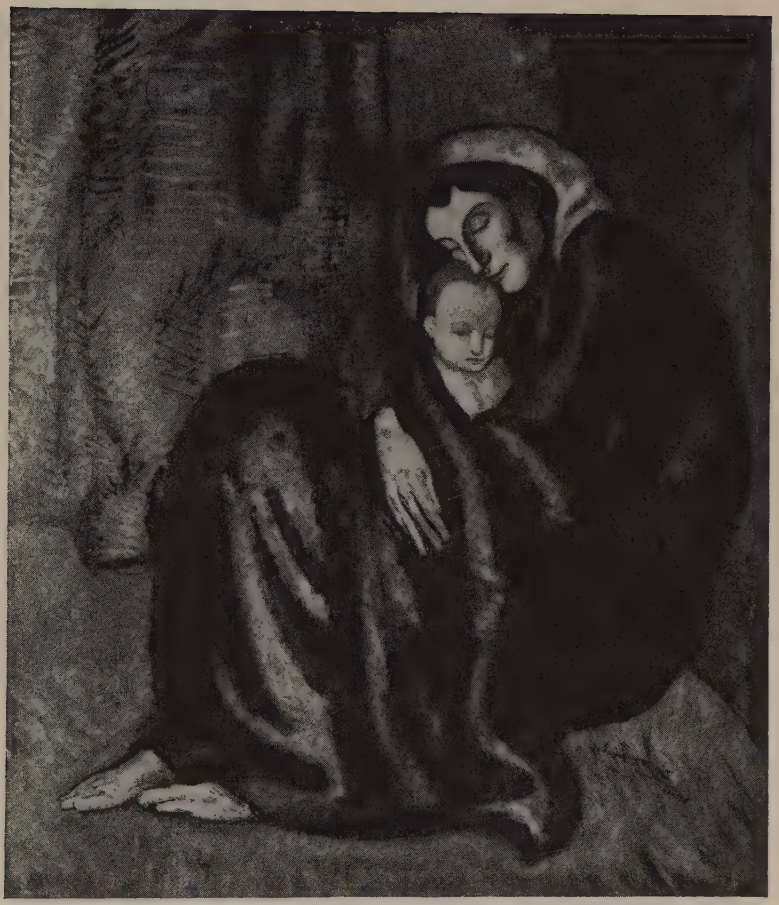
A. Hyatt Mayor

The drawing of "Faun Playing Pipes To A Nymph" is reproduced through the courtesy of Mr. John Nicholas Brown. The other two drawings come from Waldemar George's book on Picasso, plates 47 and 23. "Maternity" is reproduced through the courtesy of Paul Rosenburg & Co. "The Lovers" is taken from plate 10 in André Breton's "Le Surréalisme et La Peinture."

SAPPHIC

Moon-haunted birds flying white in the moonlight
Monotonous above the swaying mast-heads
You will be over the water when under
The sea the galleys.

Charles Norman



Maternity, *ca.* 1903 Pablo Picasso

The Lovers, 1919 — Pablo Picasso

Still Life, 1926 Pablo Picasso

TWILIGHT

A PARAPHRASE

The twelve Apostles cast lots for their journeys to the six ends of the earth.

These golden skeins; these clean as the sea;
these of linen; these hyacinthine;
these like red lightning, and the purpureal
stand for the six allotted lands
where, after twelve years, we twelve go.

Two skeins fell to only one man.
Their color is not remembered;
their meaning was unpleasing.
Even when each was split
the same dye was seen to have run
throughout —
their hues were those of the Indies.

Judas, called Thomas (that is to say, the Twin) knew the historians and geographers taught how India was divided into three parts. The first was said to end in Ethiopia, the second at Media, and the third to complete the country. He was reluctant to accept his lot. But the Lord made Thomas go;

If one must go through India,
which stretches from the ocean to the darkness,
one goes disguised; —
if one must go to India,
unwilling, doubtful, and fearful;
still feeling one's fingers
probe the loved wound; —
if one must go towards India,
one goes by sea.
One sails fast on a fair wind.

Climb up out of the boat, Thomas,
under the Evening Star;

and after adventures not told here he set out on a coasting vessel, which put in at a port on the way.

go straight through the twin,
stone masts of the water-gate;
push against this voice of flute players,
water-organs, and trumpets.

—Today has been a holiday in our town;
the gods of our town have sent you.
Give your good will to the marriage we
of our King's daughter. [herald

The Apostle resolved to conform outwardly to the people, and to observe the meaning of their manners better than they, while in all things at the same time to imitate the Saviour.

When they pass the perfume round,
dip a little ointment from the jar—so—
for the eyebrows, ears, nostrils, and
Neglect not the tongue; [mouth.
and rub your heart well.
Now, as the myrtle garlands are strawed
and the revellers crown one another,
twist your spray with oak leaves
to wreathe a crown for your own head.
But choose a reed for your scepter,
now, as the floors are strewn.

Yet despite his thoughts, his heart did not open, and he found, like all imitators, that his acts were failures. The reed, with which he would rule, not only bent but broke, and when he presumed to crown his head

Though I lie down with these people
who lie down to feast,
I drink nothing. I feel unable to eat
at this wedding; and the wine tastes to me
as though I had changed it to water.

The flute girl holds the flute in her hands
as she goes among the couches.
She is of my people
and sees me, and sounds her reed

(which no one had crowned) with the leaves of love and power, the leaves of love hurt him.

over my head a long, long time.
Should I raise my eyes, our eyes
would fly forth like birds, and birds
mating.

Also the cupbearer knows me.
(He was in Jerusalem on my day of
He passes me the cup; [fear.)
our eyes know one another.

He has struck me across the face!

"Your act may be forgiven you in death,
"but I shall have that hand
"brought to me by a dog."

The mock scepter broke.
The myrtle of the crown
dug down into my head, like thorns.

At that moment he saw in the Loved One the image of his Soul.

The curtains move.
Our eyes turn to the stairs
which lead to the higher tables.
The curtains part. The bride
stands before the revellers.

"Thou maid, thou child of light,
"to see thee is to look, steadfast, on majesty.
"Thy skirts, like spring flowers,
"give forth a good, green smell.
"Thy forehead is carved with the King, seated
"feeding those seated beside him.

"Truth rest from their labors,
"reposing behind thine eyes;
"with thy feet, little joys are shown forth plain.
"Thy teeth sing thee praise;
"and thine hands answer each to each
"like the dancing chorus of ages.
"Thy fingers are keys to the gate of a tower:
"thy tongue is a curtain behind a door,
"drawn for him whoever enters.
"Thy neck rises like the stair
"whereon man mounts to learning.
"Thy chamber, when warm, breathes balsam and
"It is bowered with iris and myrtle; [myrrh.
"and carpeted with vernal laurel, and oak leaves.
"About thee, stands a wall of seven men —
"groomsmen of thy choosing.
"Seven girls dance before thee,
"while twelve spy out the desires of thy lover.
"They shall all lie down to share his lasting joy.
"They shall all fall away out of time.
"They shall all sink deep away into happy light;
"for they have eaten food which takes away desire,
"and drunken wine which takes all thirst away.
"They are the sons of knowledge;
"They are the daughters of wisdom."

But he was too far from her to have her hear him; and of those close by, only the Flute Girl heard his pathos.

— The song of the stranger dies,
for it could not outlive our silence;
and now it is for us as though
we had not heard one sound.

— Only the flute girl continues to hear it
but then, she is one of his blood.
— Even she stands off from him
and plays her flute to us; and to us
alone.
(Yet she looks at him more and more,
for he grows beautiful under her eyes.)

— The flute girl's tune wanes at the close
as though it died in love.
— She lies down before him,
and gazes and gazes upon him.
(But he looks down at the ground,
waiting until he can go.)

His hid anger towards them who reflected about him his guilty fear began to take effect and was accomplished.

(The cupbearer moves to the fountain
to cool his smarting hand.)
— I heard thunder!
— There is no wrath in the sky.

(A royal lion breaks from his cage.
He scorns the flesh of what he kills:
and rends
One black dog seizes a hand.
It runs up into the feast
wagging its tail, whining with pride.
It has dropped the cupbearer's hand
between the stranger's feet.)

They understood no more than before, but were disturbed and called down their reasonable Ruler to them, who

— O King! come down to our feast! tell
us
What is this man we have taken in among
us?

(The King descends, the flute girl
snaps her pipe
and throws the halves away.)

came and told Thomas to bless the Loved One in her hearing.

—Rise, who command my lions!
Come back, come up with me,
whom even my dogs revenge.
Bless my daughter.

—He has already given one blessing,
and though we did not talk to one another
and were still,
it is as though we had not heard one word.

Christ! could I have made them hear?
For, though I watched,
I have not seen you at this feast.

—Rise! I command you,
Thomas! who have command
over my lions and whom my guests cannot hear;
come, my daughter will hear you—
give her a blessing.

If one must go toward a strange marriage bed,
one goes with a blessing;
but one goes unwilling, doubtful, and fearful nevertheless.
—Rise! I command you, Thomas,
who must command your own reluctance
since you command our desires.

I have sent all but the bridegroom
forth from the presence of my daughter.
Come, give her your blessing.

What shall you say to the lovers
they have not said already?
What is there, left over to say?
I am in a strange land:

Thomas, again reluctant, pondered as he went how he could cast the burden of his duty on God's shoulders.

"O my Lord, who go with me always
"leading me when I trust you,
"uncovering the hid,
"and speaking the unspoken;
"you planted the good tree
"and taught it to bear fruit;
"you are in ever-labouring change,
"who are ever the same, and ever at rest;
"you were in all, and are to come in all.
"Our courage of life, who overcome the foe;
"before whom all doors open,
"and behind whom all mount the wide sky—

"I pray you now, who at another marriage,
"did mix water with water, so that both ran wine;
"as at your first miracle, so now at this espousal,
"as body with body mingles, espouse the good and the happy."

The Sons of knowledge, the Daughters of wisdom, and the Watchers sounded a night alarm against the false pride which follows close upon false modesty.

Beware! Beware!
It is to come
saying in your hearts,
"I am the Christ."
Do not believe.
Reserve your faith. Be proud.
Be stubborn. Be hard.
What is sinful in man before God
is virtuous before this one;
believe, or obey—
your obedience and faith
will compound to your damnation.

Lo! these are Its marvels
told by the groomsmen;
It will say to the Sun,
"Be dark," and the Sun shall darken.
It will say to the darkness, "Shine,"
and the black sun shall be brilliant.
It will turn the moon to blood,
and make it bleed away;
It will walk over rivers of blood,
and on seas as on dry land.
It will make the lame walk after It;
the deaf shall hear It; the blind see It;
It and the dumb shall talk long together.
Its hands shall make lepers be thought clean,
and Its spittle shall cause the sick
to act as though they were whole.
It will cast out devils
that the world may be cast to devils.
It will heal diseases,

that minds may be diseased.
It will do all that Christ does,
but shall raise no one from death —

Lo! these are Its earmarks,
shown by the bridemaids,
that ye may know It and not be deceived.
It is weakly, and young, and lame;
there are bald, white places on Its temples.
Look at Its hands!
Those scabs are not scars.
Study It not in your heart;
Consider It not in your eyes,
for It alters Itself to accord with your will
and shifts Its behavior
to insinuate into your sense.
But, though Its whole head flame before your nerves,
you can tell It always
for It cannot change Its hands.

Lo! The King, your father, sends us from your chamber;
yet, as we go, we leave warning behind:
This one comes in the form of Christ.
We watchers listen for another coming.
Christ, when He comes,
comes in the form of a Dove
ringed with Doves around,
and with a Sign before.
Seven rings of seven Doves
hovering from Heaven.
The Cross, which is a Voice
shining from the East to the West.

(Tread lightly, we must tread lightly;
it is not yet dawn.
Let your foot-falls sound no louder,
no louder
than the cries on the wind
of sailors who are putting a boat,
by the water-gate
this early, off from the quay.

The lovers still lie sleeping.
But spread the table for breakfast
and bring it before the bridegroom,
the bridegroom and the bride.)

In the morning the Ruler and his Consort entered with their Servants to the chamber of the Loved One whose Servants they had sent away.

— What is come over you, our children?
Why do you sit opposite each other
like an old man and wife?

— O my mother and my father,
my knowing, agèd father,
my law-giver in all things:
After you sent the seven groomsmen
out of my bedroom
all went forth; the door shut,
and my husband raised the canopy.
Then someone came through the door
(though the door did not open before
he laid himself on the bed [him)
and motioned us apart to sit on chairs.

They found that instead of Thomas and Jesus Christ with him, the anti-Christ alone had entered the bridal chamber and had left a curse on the bed.

His kindly eyes reproved us,
and what he then said is now repeated
as, behind these mirrors, [round me,
all which has passed before their sur-
might be repeated. [faces
"Keep in mind, my children,
"what the Apostle said;
"and to whom he entrusted your love
"—the Everlasting Arms.
"And this know—that if you refuse
this thing
"you become the double temple
"of virtue unweakened by act."

—I was told it was not a bad act, I said.
It is the seed of children,
as my mother told me.

"The child destroys the parent.
"Beget one child, and you beget many sins.
"For its sake, you will tell yourselves,
"(though truly it will be for your own pride)
"you envy widows and rob orphans.
"(Your sin will hurt others; it will hurt you more.)

"Beget many children, and you beget many ills;
"of many children,
"some are bound to be moon-struck, some half-witted;
"some unable to walk;
"some not to hear; some not to speak;
"or unable to see.

"Even if all be wholesome
"some will be good-for-nothing — shiftless, perverse;
"some will be adulterers, murderers, thieves, or
"some secretly — some even openly;— [bestial;
"and you — struck down in the sight of all.

"Mine are the pitying hands
"which shield your backs from the flail,
"and catch you up from life,
"and wipe away your tears.

"Touch not this unclean thing —
"pain will not touch you.
"You will never be cast down.
"You shall bear invisible children
"who shall ever look to the marriage
"of virgin Truth, undefiled by thought.
"You and these children —
"mankind, and all mankind's ideals
"shall enter to the Bridegroom's bed!"

— When we heard this, we believed.
And sat here on our chairs all night.

— Children! You show us sorrow
at the hour we looked to see joy.
Do you not love one another?

— I love my wife with a pure love!
— I love my husband greatly.
I shall go on being in love always;
and always hold my husband to my love.

— Is it for that purpose, daughter,
that you now sit naked before him?

— The mirror of shame is clouded before me, mother;
never again can my body abash my husband.
I am subject neither to pleasure nor to passion,
since neither pleasure nor passion is to be found in me.
My mind is free from lewdness and bitterness of
heart;
I am cheerful — very cheerful, and I am happy;
I shall go down to the grave
able to say, "I have always been very happy."

— Speak up, man, tell her
she will go to her grave a fool.

— I hold this husband of mine as of no account, father.
I have lost all memory of my marriage to this lover.
I have joined myself in a marriage which is different,
to another, different, lover; — my soul's twin.

— Are you turned entirely to a woman, my young man,
that you answer our daughter while she speaks,
and continue, though she continues,
your voice rising shriller and shriller?
— Thanks to the Lord
who is shown forth in me,
freed of the disease,
healed of the wound,
slow to heal,
cleaned of the illness,

hard to make well—
called love!
The earthly manure is lifted away
from the young, green shoot of the lively seed.

God shows himself to me
as though in a mirror
where I looked to see myself stand!

—True gods, my son, are to be seen
not in ourselves, but in other men.
This is the Law whereunder the Eternal
incarnates itself in Time.

—From Time, God sets me free,
yet finds me worthy to go on living forever.
He brings me back from falling,
and leads me to higher places.
Oh, God, Thou didst lower Thyself
to unite me with Thee.
I shall search myself out
and know what I was and all I am now
that I may, again, be as I was before.
Indeed I was not myself,
but Thou, God, whom I knew not,
showeth me to myself.
Love flameth so in me
it burneth what I want to say.
All I tell of my love
is only a little song.
Love findeth no fault in me
that I cannot think hard thoughts,

for Love loveth little thoughts
as Love loveth little children —
and it is Love, it is Love
that singeth my little love song.

— Go out quick round the town,
get me that man whom I led with mine own hand
into mine house to bless mine only daughter.
When you have him, tear him in two,
as I tear my robe.
But first, flay his skin from him
and rub in vinegar, with salt.
See that you rend him before these children,
whom he sundered.

With this miscarriage of the Gospel, the Apostle left port and continued whither he had been sent.

— The Jew has left town.
— A sail passed just now the farthest harbor.
We sought him high and low,
but found only the flute girl, patting the dog
and gazing where the Morning Star had faded.
— She was weeping.

John Wheelwright

EIGHTH DECLAMATION

HOW different, Anthony, are the nights now, when I walk alone, from those of my love for Florence in the city. How different in particular from that Walpurgis night of my exceptionally morbid cunning, when I arranged without your foreknowledge that the two of you should share the dark together. On dim, deserted streets I hurried through a city of eyes, under the constant surveillance of disparate objects which, as I passed, each transferred me to the supervision of the next. And there were real eyes among them, eyes of the cats that paused to note me with distrust and crouched in balls behind their faces. As though a convocation of demons were met to deliberate the next step in my conduct, and as though much heated disagreement were followed by their unanimous acclaiming of a policy for me, after many hours of bafflement I suddenly felt some desire other than to continue this insensate movement. I would go, I told myself, and batter at my own door until you came to admit me. I would make my way as in a trance to Florence — and regardless of her attire I would kneel before her. But as I hesitated at the sill without knocking, I found a packet of refuse I had earlier placed here — and in the barren hallway I lay down beside it. Such is the grotesqueness of suffering, that I lay beside this refuse. Then I went quietly away, and all beyond the door was left silent and enigmatic.

Now that this trouble's molten fluids lie buried beneath a crust of melancholy, my walks in the night are short interims between study and sleep. I recapitulate the day, to guaranty the soundness of my investments, be they in lands, cattle, or

family. I inspect the remaining centrifugalities of my character, questioning my present anchorage, and in the interests of protection attempting to foresee what possible events could again leave me disorbited.

This dampened moodiness, this confining of the horizon to my own hills, this blankness of the future — could I not, if differently schooled, wholly accept them as placidity? The frog from which portions of the brain have been abstracted, leaps at each prodding and croaks when caressed — the frog I believe is happy. Similarly we would drop things from us, to reach haven by a lessening. Yet I am aware that the very caution of our life makes possible some speculative latitude, and that protest, disappearance, abandonment will form the substance of our speculations: we may recognize such gnarling of our past that we must maintain equilibrium by leaning.

Ah, one will scheme for his composure. Though none but tainted men contemplate suicide and madness, a certain immunity may result from sufficient consideration of these destinies. It is useful to have contained some morbidity during the keener expectations of our early years, since we learn to bargain for continuance and balance at a time when hopefulness flows strongest. And when later experiences threaten to overwhelm us, it is as though, having gone mad or killed ourselves before, we could profit by the skill of our past error. Few would perish by their own hand if they waited a fortnight — and surely no one will fall victim to a form of insanity which he abhors. Still, one fears destruction less when he has completed his samplings and knows that he has had a little of all that others have had in great quantity.

By what justice, Anthony, do I write these pages as though destined for your perusal, when in their very composition I find myself relieved of the desire to address you? We both

share the certainty of words — and one who is at work while his neighbours slumber needs no external sanction for his trade, assured that even a philosophy of despair may, in its couching, become an ornament to living. I dare pursue these difficulties, knowing that what can cross the mind of one man can be the life-long preoccupation of another, and what can be the life-long preoccupation of one man can become the dominant concern of whole eras and peoples. I would have you join me in lauding the pressure of speech. Consider Arouet, by nature fawning, open to any bribe, currying the favour of any despot, limiting flattery solely by the measure of his auditor's credulousness, bending to any opportunity, renouncing any principle, yet undoing whole months of sycophancy by a sudden flash of wit, for he could stifle a remark which he considered too malicious, unless he also considered it clever. Each time he retorted to avenge an insult, his words were of so pointed a nature that the general structure of the state would groan. It was not his venom, but his accuracy, that aroused the persecution of the court — a splutterer might even have been lovable. It was not his bravery, but his phrasing, that made him intransigent.

A gift is an imperative; a power is a command. It is the successful at love who burn for women, and the articulate who are driven by the need of statement. I would proclaim the musculature of diction. I have seen men of practical accomplishments, harsh in their detestation of thought, who would have terrified me as monsters, and cowed me as powers, did they not proudly display some pun, sickly but of their own making, and insist that their companions show delight in it. There is not one of them but would be an adept at repartee, and withal not one of them but is unfit to apply the sound epithet to a single item of God's universe. I will not allow

these weaklings of art to enjoy a jot of self-respect beyond their skill as drudges. He who is impatient of reading, who cannot trace coexistent melodies, who perceives no vast authority in a brush-stroke, is no dog, for he lacks the keen scent of dogs. Whatever our humilities, let them vanish in the presence of such opponents, who merit no encouragement until they have grovelled. Yet I have often left my position unavowed, aware that the self-appointed champions of difficult causes usually display few virtues beyond their devotion, and by their raw urgency will enlist further enmity for the things they advocate.

On my score I have dared quarrel with art, regretting the effectiveness of silence, and of that trickery whereby the sentence most trivial in itself is made weightiest by the assistance of plot — as when a little girl should say, "See, the red poppy is in bloom," saying this as an observation of no importance, merely out of pleasure with the flower's suddenness, though the reader knows from past disclosures in the text that the blooming of this poppy is to mark her own death. Thinkers, in the codifying of their passions, leave the unthinking with a deceptive nomenclature for preferences. Men of intensity, dismayed at their excess, find formulae for its cancellation, and these formulae are taught to the middling. From whatever point of view we choose to classify mankind, people will fall into at least two opposing groups; and thus for half of them the world's best doctrine will be subversive. So we would hold that wisdom itself remains a jungle, and that the most astute exhortation can fall upon the wrong ears.

Yet have not the most menacing foes of art been its adherents? For if they are not worse than other men, their greater expressiveness makes their vices more apparent. They are treacherous, more treacherous than a loyalist's dreams, for

often their familiarity with one another is founded upon too flimsy a basis. They are to be listened to, however, as their unwholesome manner of living gives them an advantage in style over those whose environment is less exceptional. Untouched by compromise, the most ineffectual of them will pardon no lack of greatness in his acquaintances, nor forgive its presence. Yet when they condemn a colleague, they do so not wholly through malice but partly in the effort to keep from repeating him. And often, before this exile, I have heard them, fresh from their failure to write a sonnet, proclaiming the futility of all culture.

It is, rather, the scholars I would solicit, humble voyagers bewildered in that jungle of wisdom which I have mentioned, equally incompetent in life and among the archives. One I have met since coming here, with an absurdly kindly face, as in some comic drawing of a fruit or vegetable which, by the artist's addition of arms and legs and a few crude lines of physiognomy, recommends itself more to our sympathies than our appetites. "Raised in an atmosphere of piety," he confided, "denied the correctives of vulgar witticism which are needed to keep the mind of a child wholesome while it is being taught a code of the unclean, I early possessed a structure of theological thinking which left me little desire for companions of my own years. Indeed, my life was given an unreal consistency, for my parents were too scrupulous in their upbringing of me to permit themselves those moments of anger or injustice which would have provided me a sounder schooling. One's childhood should be a closer duplicate of the adult world, should be this later world in miniature — and my parents would have done me greater benefit had they been less exemplary. For my misdeeds I was reprimanded, as neither my mother nor my father would allow themselves to relax

in my discipline, and for my accomplishments I was rewarded, with the result that I faced the future with no notion of the tentative nature of our living.

"I will not pause now to explain the perilous years during which I struggled to adjust this early equipment to a world so tragically different. Not only would the account of them be inessential to the story I am about to tell you, but also they were so noxious that they seem by a purposive forgetfulness to have been crowded from the memory. Whereas some things are locked too deeply for avowal, others may be sunk even beyond recollection.

"After the dangers of madness had been miraculously weathered — and only weathered, I believe, by such accidents as a change of scene at the proper moment, or the failure to receive a certain letter, or the death of a dear relative under absurd circumstances — I met a quiet woman of twenty, Margaret, of pious parentage like myself, and equally timid. Though I had by now turned to the most godless of philosophies, and looked upon myself as the negation of my former training, I soon discovered how much faith within me was still pleading for corroboration, as I had come imperceptibly to place upon Margaret the full burden of these earlier responsibilities, exalting her, and even inspiring her, with theological terms of praise.

"We had gone far in this difficult probing of sensitivity, and both her health and my own, I believe, were being impaired by the strain of our restrictions, when this idyll suffered the irruption of a man who had no patience with such rarity, and perhaps did not even suspect its presence. He was much older, but possessed a certain physical obviousness, and had about him such an air of the expectant as to awaken in those he particularly cared to please, the suggestion of futurity. They

would not ask themselves, 'What is our relationship today?' but 'This relationship — what will it be subsequently?' With others I enjoyed his heartiness, his muscular manner, his wilful judgments, made abrupt and youthful by good health and previous successes.

"I am not competent to describe the change which came over me. But a new factor had arisen, or something asleep had been awakened. My love for Margaret, as I had known it, was gone, and in its place I experienced a kind of harshness. Painfully engrossed, yet expert with a new slyness, I watched her transformation at the call of this man. Under the guise of conversational levity, I noted their blazing eyes, their alert bodies, their flood of witty interchange. During banter on the surface harmless, I observed her, tranquil under months of our subtle courtship, now made hectic with consent. The man left soon afterwards, so that the crisis did not spread beyond the sphere of the hypothetical. But within a week I too had gone — for that undefined groping of our past could not be restored, and I was not enough the schemer to adopt the tactics of my rival. Yet the incident left me strangely envenomed, and it was many years before I could sée that I myself had been at fault."

After a considerable silence, the gloom dropped from him. He faced me briskly, and I saw that he was about to speak with encouragement. "I believe the day will come," and he was prophesying, "when all these disturbances are over, when two people are no more set apart from other men by love than they are by speech, or happiness, or music. The day will come when affection is shared as we now share the elements, when universal gentleness takes precedence over the fierce predilection of one person for another. The day will come —" and at this point his voice became inaudible. Then, with a new be-

ginning: "But will the day come? For people are set apart by art or happiness, just as one interrupts for a moment his exaltation in a concert hall to glance with scorn at a restless neighbour. And we share the elements not through virtue, but merely due to imperfections in our ways of ownership. Could sunlight be deflected, the countries of the vanquished would lie in darkness. I mean thereby that we cannot have the softness of great insight, the pardon before offence, made constant. The day, and here I would revise my statement, will never come."

He wept, and I saw that he had wept seldom, for his whole body bespoke weeping — and in its surrender was repulsive as the distorted features partially hidden by his arm. Finally, "As a test of unhappiness," he resumed, "imagine what manner of life one would impose upon himself were he expiating some great wrong or striving to obtain forgetfulness. Picture existence as it would become under such a theoretical burden, and you will picture the daily habits of us all."

I cherish such meetings, when each man puts his wares upon the table for the other to observe and value. Even while hearing little beyond one's own old soliloquies, he profits by the alterations which a new auditor imposes upon his rehearsal. However, the two of us have since avoided each other, for both realized that in our first discussion he had brought forth everything he considered of moment, had given me the best cullings of a life which was, in its total, dreary and inarticulate. I respected him for his ability to exhaust himself thus rapidly, for though a greater power of multiplication would have brought him more comfort, his aridness contributed to his accuracy.

KENNETH BURKE

THE CROW BECOMES DISCURSIVE

THE grain is rotting on the stalks.
Still that beggar waves his arms to scare me away.
There is an air of loneliness about him.
At night he is lonelier still
gazing at the black line across the sky
of me and my kind going steadily to the rookery.

Autumn has ruffled my feathers.
If my voice is not hoarser than it was
something gone from the air makes it seem so.
The beginning chill of autumn disturbs me.
I must sit on the fence with my head turned sidewise and think.
I watch other birds departing.
I wonder. Why do we crows always linger?

Other autumns have been and gone.
It is always the same story. Always the same.

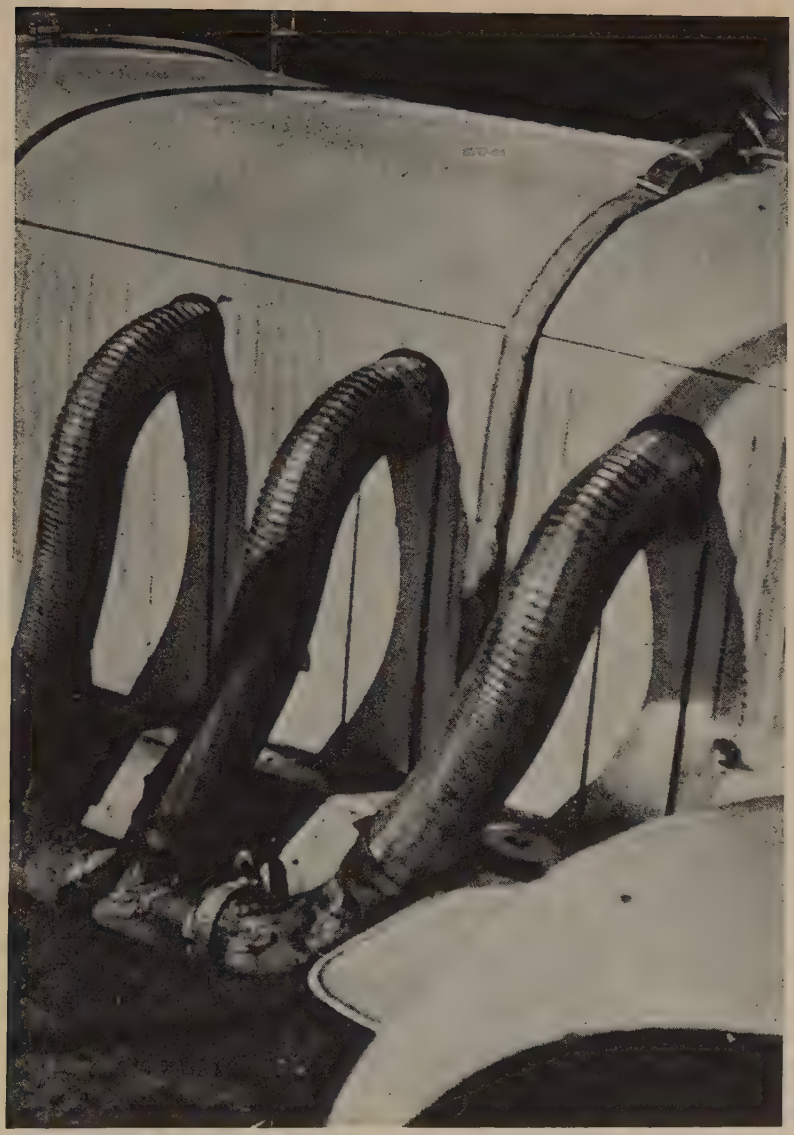
As I fly the shadow on the ground which runs after me
is longer than usual. On snow patches it brightens.

It is nightfall. I will fly to the rookery.
I will caw forlornly. It is fitting.
A black line of crows across the sky, harsh calls in the air,
and autumn with winter near and no corn upon the stalks.

ROBERT MCALMON

Still Life

Harry Crosby



Racing Car — Harry Crosby

Jockey

Harry Crosby

HAWTHORNE

MR. LLOYD MORRIS'S recent biography of Hawthorne[1] is a work of genuine merit and deserves the attention which a serious study of Hawthorne's genius should attract. As a biography it belongs to the modern school of "biography made easy"—it "runs as lightly as a novel," never halting to make a footnote or support a fact. When it is well done, there is no valid objection to this method; we take the biographer on trust and he presents us, after much labour and deliberation, with a work of art which is, in effect, the outcome of a sound judgment, a skilful control of material, and a scientific probity. It is true that Mr. Julian Hawthorne, the son of the novelist, has accused Mr. Morris[2] of distorting his father's character in essential particulars; he was robust and "commonsensical," whereas Mr. Morris has made him a very Gentle Fanny, anæmic, morbid and mysterious. But though we must give due weight to a son's impression of his father's personality, we must also remember that nowhere is a man so hidden as in his own family circle, and that the character he wears habitually in other men's eyes is often very different from the personality he creates within himself. Mr. Morris sees, not a body that moves and speaks in the daily round of life, but a mind whose real dwelling was in the remoter world of fancy and whose speech was certain works of art; and in his attempt to portray that more essential Hawthorne he has our sympathy and a good deal of our admiration.

That Hawthorne was not quite the breezy man of the world

[1] *The Rebellious Puritan. Portrait of Mr. Hawthorne.* By Lloyd Morris. London and New York, 1928.

[2] *Saturday Review of Literature*, April 16, 1927.

of his son's idealization is proved, if need be, by the curious fascination which he exercised on minds so perceptive and so worthy of him as Emerson and Melville. Emerson was impressed by "the painful solitude of the man," yearned for his intimate friendship, but felt a barrier of "unwillingness and caprice." Hawthorne, we know, had a deep scorn for all metaphysical reasoning; he "admired Emerson as a poet of deep beauty and austere tenderness, but sought nothing from him as a philosopher." "For myself," he wrote in *The Old Manse*, "there had been epochs of my life when I, too, might have asked of this prophet the master word that should solve me the riddle of the universe; but now, being happy, I felt as if there were no question to be put." Hawthorne, we feel, was a greater man than Emerson; he held to some truth that gave him the mastery and the inevitable scorn. Herman Melville's cry was deeper. "Whence come you, Hawthorne? By what right do you drink from my flagon of life? And when I put it to my lips — lo, they are yours and not mine. I feel that the Godhead is broken up like the Bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces. Hence this infinite fraternity of feeling." Hawthorne recoiled from the intensity of Melville's conception of friendship; perhaps, Mr. Morris suggests, he did not understand it. "He was incapable of sharing the ecstasies and pangs which their relations yielded to Melville. No doubt he desired neither ecstasies nor pangs. No doubt he desired only peace." Hawthorne had no more liking for mysticism than for metaphysics, but in his rejection of Melville we cannot be equally sure of the rightness of his attitude. It does not go without saying that Hawthorne was the greater man. The greater artist, yes; but Melville's "divine magnanimities" encompassed far more than Hawthorne's equanimity. In Hawthorne, simple happi-

ness; in Melville, the "profoundest sense of being." "Ineffable socialities are in me. . . It is a strange feeling — no hopefulness is in it, no despair. Content — that is it; and irresponsibility; but without licentious inclination."

Hawthorne's happiness was perhaps due to nothing more than the simplicity of his life. It is not fair (to this extent I agree with Mr. Julian Hawthorne) to call him a Puritan, even a rebellious one. In no sense is his art what the psychologists call a compensation — in no sense a reaction to environment or education, a working-off of repressions, a rationalization of fixed ideas. Hawthorne was born with a lively sensibility and that freedom of mind which best conduces to a temperate art; and there seems to have been no attempt to interfere with his natural development. The only necessities that ever seriously galled him were economic. He led a strangely secluded life in his adolescent years, but not stranger than that of any youth of his temperament born into the dreary waste of provincial life. His defects (which have often the appearance of being inhibitions) are really defects of education — as is most obviously shown in his aversion, later in life, to the nude statues he found everywhere about him in Rome. His remark that "man is no longer a naked animal; his clothes are as natural to him as his skin, and sculptors have no more right to undress him than to flay him," strikes us with the force of its crudity rather than its prudery. It was not so much a "strange, vague, long-dormant heritage of his strait-laced Puritan ancestry" as a simple lack of experience. There is surely plenty of evidence in his writings (in the descriptions of Zenobia in *The Blithedale Romance*, for example) to show that the sensuous elements in nature appealed to him in a normal way. Except that the Puritan was an integral part of the historical consciousness which he set himself out

to portray, it is difficult to see how the label ever came to be applied so freely to Hawthorne. Actually he was the very antithesis of a Puritan.

It has already been observed that he was no mystic, and was, if anything, repelled by mysticism. But he was absorbed in something which is often confused with mysticism — in mystery or mysteriousness. And this fact is really the key to his character, if we can arrive at an understanding of it. There is in *Our Old Home* a passage which gives us a clue. In itself the passage is a remarkable anticipation of more recent interpretations of Gothic art. Hawthorne is describing Lichfield Cathedral:

"To my uninstructed vision, it seemed the object best worth gazing at in the whole world; and now, after beholding a great many more, I remember it with less prodigal admiration only because others are as magnificent as itself. The traces remaining in my memory represent it as airy rather than massive. A multitude of beautiful shapes appeared to be comprehended within its single outline; it was a kind of kaleidoscopic mystery, so rich a variety of aspects did it assume from each altered point of view, through the presentation of a different face, and the rearrangement of its peaks and pinnacles and the three battlemented towers, with the spires that shot heavenward from all three, but one loftier than its fellows. Thus it impressed you at every change, as a newly created structure of the passing moment, in which yet you lovingly recognized the half-vanished structure of the instant before and felt, moreover, a joyful faith in the indestructible existence of all this cloudlike vicissitude. A Gothic cathedral is surely the most wonderful work which mortal man has yet achieved, so vast, so intricate, and so profoundly simple, with such strange, delightful recesses in its grand

figure, so difficult to comprehend within one idea, and yet all so consonant that it ultimately draws the beholder and his universe into its harmony. It is the only thing in the world that is vast enough and rich enough.

"Not that I felt, or was worthy to feel, an unmingled enjoyment in gazing at this wonder. I could not elevate myself to its spiritual height, any more than I could have climbed from the ground to the summit of one of its pinnacles. Ascending but a little way, I continually fell back and lay in a kind of despair, conscious that a flood of uncomprehended beauty was pouring down upon me, of which I could appropriate only the minutest portion. After a hundred years, incalculably as my higher sympathies might be invigorated by so divine an employment, I should still be a gazer from below and at an awful distance, as yet remotely excluded from the interior mystery. But it was something gained, even to have that painful sense of my own limitations, and that half-smothered yearning to soar beyond them."

This sense of an almost giddy vertiginous gulf between human finiteness and the infinity of the Absolute, whether in art or in religion, is the peculiar Northern or Gothic sensibility; and Hawthorne is a very pure representative of it. Nevertheless, he might well feel the painful sense of his own limitations at the sight of a Gothic cathedral, because this sense of the finite and the infinite, and of the infinite in the finite, can only be expressed through the access of an emotional force such as comes from an organized and universal religion. Hawthorne, of course, lacked this support, and fell back on that substitute which has proved a weariness to so many of his readers — symbolism. It is quite extraordinary how large a part this method of expression plays in his work. The greater number of his short stories and the four longer

romances are either built around a symbol or liberally strewn with symbolic illustrations. The frequent introduction of mesmerism and spiritualism as factors in the plot merely shows the contagion of contemporary enthusiasms, and is a warning of how psycho-analysis in modern fiction may strike a reader fifty years hence. But the symbolism of which *The Scarlet Letter* is the most familiar example cannot so easily be dismissed. Or, at least, to dismiss it is to dismiss the essential quality of Hawthorne's art.

This quality was well described by Henry James in that biography of Hawthorne which is such a significant document in modern criticism, as an "element of cold and ingenious fantasy," and was further characterized as "passionless." Henry James did not really appreciate this quality; one can hardly imagine Henry James appreciating Spenser and Bunyan, who are its great exemplifiers. He remarks with reference to *The Scarlet Letter*, that "the absence of a certain something warm and straightforward, a trifle more grossly human and vulgarly natural, which one finds in *Adam Blair*, will always make Hawthorne's tale less touching to a large number of even very intelligent readers, than a love story told with the robust, synthetic pathos which served Lockhart so well." This was written in 1879, early in James's own career; and by the irony of events this is just the sort of criticism which is now being levelled against James's own later work. In fact, though he hardly realized it, James moved in his later years very near to the "cold and ingenious fantasy," the "passionless" quality of Hawthorne's tales; for what but allegories, revolving round symbols, are such novels as *The Golden Bowl*, *The Wings of the Dove*, and *The Ivory Tower?* The difference, we would hazard, is merely one of the degree of intelligence involved. Is it possible that the

cause determining the form was the same in both cases?

Let us further characterize this form as two-dimensional. It lacks the third dimension of depth, or passion. Hawthorne, who was well aware of the limits of his talent (and this has a great deal to do with his strength) observed of his *Twice-Told Tales* that

"They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade — the coolness of a meditative habit, which diffuses itself through the feeling and observation of every sketch. Instead of passion, there is sentiment; and even in what purport to be pictures of actual life, we have allegory, not always so warmly dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood, as to be taken into the reader's mind without a shiver. Whether from lack of power, or an unconquerable reserve, the Author's touches have often an effect of tameness; the merriest man can hardly contrive to laugh at his broadest humour; the tenderest woman, one would suppose, will hardly shed warm tears at his deepest pathos. The book, if you would see anything in it, requires to be read in the clear, brown, twilight atmosphere in which it was written; if opened in the sunshine, it is apt to look exceedingly like a volume of blank pages."

And in another place Hawthorne confesses that his native propensities were towards Fairy Land.

All these self-descriptions are meant modestly enough, but they should not be taken as disparagements. Hawthorne's art belongs to that order of fancy which was defined by Coleridge as "a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space," and as having "no other counters to play with but fixities and definites." Rather than disparage such works of fantasy, we should respect them as giving free play to the intelligence. Here alone in the world of fiction can the mind

range unobstructed by emotion; and here, surely, is the possibility of an art as universal and as indestructible as the "cloud-like vicissitudes" of Gothic architecture. Its very passionless quality, moreover, assures it of that objectivity which is the aim and distinction of all classical art; and objectivity was a characteristic which Henry James, without these considerations in mind, noted in Hawthorne's writing. It is precisely this objectivity which saves his treatment of Puritanism from any suggestion of inner compulsion.

But we must press this matter farther, to ask how it came about that Hawthorne developed this particular type of art — whether, in other words, there was any compulsion determining the actual quality of his art. This involves us in a very delicate, a very significant, and a very complex problem. It can be briefly stated in words which Henry James used in this connection, and which may stand as a text for the whole debate — "that the flower of art blooms only where the soil is deep, that it takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature, that it needs a complex social machinery to set a writer in motion." Henry James himself took this text very much to heart; it was the dilemma he himself had to solve, and Hawthorne was the terrible warning he always kept before his eyes. For his definite conclusion was that Hawthorne's art had suffered, and suffered disastrously, irremediably, from the thinness and insipidity of the atmosphere he had been compelled to live in. There is no doubt that in the panic induced by his own situation Henry James tended to depreciate too much the quality of Hawthorne's work. Above all, he failed to appreciate at its true value what we might call Hawthorne's provincialism. Whatever America of today may be, New England of a hundred years ago, in spite of its political independence, was spiritually an outer province of the British

Isles. Now a province, though it lacks many of the positive virtues of a metropolis, has some rather negative virtues of its own. It is more confined in its outlook, but tends to send its roots deeper into the soil with which it is, moreover, in directer contact. Much of the best of our literature is essentially provincial — Sterne and the Brontës, and even Wordsworth. But, Henry James would have objected, provincial or not, these authors had a background, whereas in America "no State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed barely a specific national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country-houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities nor public schools — no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class — no Epsom nor Ascot!"

"What was left?" cried Henry James. "Why simply the whole of life," retorted Howells in a review of *Hawthorne*. James's own answer was that "the American knows that a good deal remains; what it is that remains — that is his secret, his joke, as one may say. It would be cruel, in this terrible denudation, to deny him the consolation of his national gift, that 'American humour' of which of late years we have heard so much."

This is altogether too scornful. It is true that this same "humour" is still the most trying feature of American writing. Facetiousness is the greatest blemish on Hawthorne's style; it is almost everywhere, and but for its presence Hawthorne would rank with a select company of four or five of our purest writers. An essay like *The Old Manse*, descriptive writing

such as is found in *Our Old Home* (surely the best book on England ever written by an American), and, occasionally, intense nervous narrative such as he gives us in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Blithedale Romance*—these cannot be matched by anything visibly dependent on Eton or Ascot. We will quote two examples:

"He spoke languidly, and only those few words, like a watch with an inelastic spring, that just ticks a moment or two, and stops again. He seemed a very forlorn old man. In the wantonness of youth, strength, and comfortable condition—making my prey of people's individualities, as my custom was—I tried to identify my mind with the old fellow's, and take his view of the world, as if looking through a smoke-blackened glass at the sun. It robbed the landscape of all its life. Those pleasantly swelling slopes of our farm, descending towards the wide meadows, through which sluggishly circled the brimful tide of the Charles, bathing the long sedges on its hither and further shores; the broad sunny gleam over the winding water; that peculiar picturesqueness of the scene where capes and headlands put themselves boldly forth upon the perfect level of the meadow, as into a green lake, with inlets between the promontories; the shadowy woodland, with twinkling showers of light falling into its depths; the sultry heat-vapour, which rose everywhere like incense, and in which my soul delighted, as indicating so rich a fervour in the passionate day, and in the earth that was burning with its love;—I beheld all these things as through old Moodie's eyes. When my eyes are dimmer than they have yet come to be, I will go thither again, and see if I did not catch the tone of his mind aright, and if the cold and lifeless tint of his perceptions be not then repeated in my own."

This shows very exact observation, and a careful, conscious

use of words, a subtle sense of rhythm. In the second passage, also from *The Blithedale Romance*, we have the same objectivity applied to a narrative of action:

"We floated past the stump. Silas Foster plied his rake manfully, poking it as far as he could into the water, and immersing the whole length of his arm besides. Hollingsworth at first sat motionless, with the hooked pole elevated in the air. But, by and by, with a nervous and jerky movement, he began to plunge it into the blackness that upbore us, setting his teeth, and making precisely such thrusts, methought, as if he were stabbing at a deadly enemy. I bent over the side of the boat. So obscure, however, so awfully mysterious, was that dark stream, that —and the thought made me shiver like a leaf—I might as well have tried to look into the enigma of the eternal world, to discover what had become of Zenobia's soul, as into the river's depths, to find her body. And there, perhaps, she lay, with her face upward, while the shadow of the boat, and my own pale face peering downward, passed slowly betwixt her and the sky!

"Once, twice, thrice, I paddled the boat up stream, and again suffered it to glide, with the river's slow, funereal motion, downward. Silas Foster had raked up a large mass of stuff, which, as it came towards the surface, looked somewhat like a flowing garment, but proved to be a monstrous tuft of water-weeds. Hollingsworth, with a gigantic effort, upheaved a sunken log. When once free of the bottom, it rose partly out of the water—all weedy and slimy, a devilish-looking object, which the moon had not shone upon for half a hundred years—then plunged again, and sullenly returned to its old resting-place, for the remnant of the century."

But it would be impossible to quote a line further, because facetiousness, in the shape of Silas Foster, stalks all through

this otherwise magnificent chapter. Perhaps it would have been juster to quote that other midnight scene, from *The Scarlet Letter*, where Dimmesdale mounts the scaffold where Hester had suffered ignominy; for in that scene Hawthorne's descriptive powers reach an intensity he never equalled elsewhere. But then this scene dissolves into supernatural manifestations of symbolic import which, in their context, have an effect of triviality or irrelevance. It is but another aspect, the serious aspect, of the phenomenon of oblique reference. Whether as humour or as allegory, this phenomenon is the same in all American writers: they walk all round the circumference of a subject and imagine they have been at the centre. Was this not the very quality which Henry James brought with him to Europe and instead of surrendering, merely transmuted into intellectual forms? That, at any rate, is the superficial aspect of his genius.

This phenomenon, however, is merely a question of style. On the question of substance I must hark back to Hawthorne's provincialism, and insist that here was a positive colour, a depth, a density — something of an integrity worth cultivating. It was a tender growth, but how vivid! We might with pleasure turn oftener to the literary charm, the historical interest, the delicate fantasy with which Hawthorne evokes the New England scene, the New England past, the New England character. It is all so authentic; and if in his devotion to it Hawthorne sacrificed the finer graces of ancient culture and the surer power of established tradition, who shall say what the alternative would have cost in moral questionings — the alternative being, as Henry James was to demonstrate, expatriation. It is perhaps not a general question at all — not a question about which the critic has a right to generalize. We can only observe the dilemma, observe that Hawthorne and

Henry James solved it in different ways, and wonder whether a gain in æsthetic values is full compensation for a loss in moral virtue. That there was a third, and a desperate, solution is proved by the case of Poe, who impaled himself on the horns of the dilemma. He could neither accept for good or ill the provincialism he lived among, nor make the necessary effort to escape from it.

This quality in Hawthorne which I have described as provincialism — his particular atmosphere or essence — and the beautiful prose in which it finds expression — these would not in themselves have sufficed to give Hawthorne the high position he occupies in English literature. The heart also was involved. In his Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* (Hawthorne's prefaces are as important as Henry James's) he once again shows us that he knew all the time what he was about:

"When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former — while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart — has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation."

"The truth of the human heart" is perhaps what Howells meant by the whole of human life. It is a sentimental phrase, of course, and Henry James might have argued that the heart can be as impoverished as the body and the mind by a

waste environment. Perhaps they can, in an abstract and very evolutionary sense. But it would be obvious nonsense to deny to the New Englander of the nineteenth century, above all to one of such refined sensibilities as Hawthorne, the fullest gamut of human emotions. And where there are emotions there can be tragedy, and all the forms of literature leading up to tragedy. No one has seriously contended that the inhabitants of America are without Original sin — if we may assume the validity of that very necessary dogma; and where there is Original sin there also is an original sense of values; and art, especially the art of the novelist, is the working out of such a sense of values. From this point of view two clauses of Henry James's text prove false; neither a deep soil nor a long history is a condition essential for art; and the remaining clause, that it needs a complex social machinery to set a writer in motion, is merely a relative condition. Hawthorne was obviously set in motion, so presumably the simple machinery of New England society was adequate in that sense; and though lack of encouragement and lack of appreciation may finally defeat the strongest creative impulse, this impulse in itself is a subjective phenomenon. In so far as art is original (and that is the last essential test of art), it is innate, and independent of social categories. It is only the socialization of art — the process by means of which the art is made available for the community through structures like the epic, the drama and the novel — it is only this process which suffers from the absence of a tradition. The poet is then apt to write for himself, or for some ideal futurity, and to be so much the less universal.

Hawthorne, however, wrote for the New England society of his time, and his art is admirably proportioned to the nature of this community. It was, above all, a very self-

conscious community. It took itself very seriously — not only in the sense that it deliberately cultivated its newly founded nationality and was already on the lookout for national heroes and national poets, but also in the sense that it tried very hard to behave itself in the eyes of the world. It was preoccupied especially with moral problems; and in making these the concern of his writing, Hawthorne was consciously or unconsciously taking advantage of whatever virtue of depth there was in the immature society around him. The Puritan conscience might at first glance seem an unpromising subject for the delicate visionary that Hawthorne in his early tales had shown himself to be; but his gift of objectivity enabled him to play lightly with the heaviest of materials. "He continued," as Henry James expressed it, "by an exquisite process best known to himself, to transmute this heavy moral burden into the very substance of the imagination, to make it evaporate in the light and charming fumes of artistic production."[3]

[3] In this connection it is interesting to compare a short story in *Twice-Told Tales* called "The Minister's Black Veil" with *The Scarlet Letter*. The theme is the same in both cases. But in "The Minister's Black Veil" the hidden remorse of the Rev. Mr. Hooper is merely symbolized in the black veil which he wears over his face, and the nature of his remorse is never known; the story remains strictly allegorical. In *The Scarlet Letter*, however, we are very soon made aware of the nature of the Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale's remorse, and though we never revel in the modern manner in the details out of which the tragic situation arises, the tragedy itself is worked out on the plane of reality. The fantasy which is the predominant quality of the short tales is in the longer romances reduced to a very subordinate place, and is even then to be regretted. So great is the difference between these two phases of Hawthorne's work that we begin to wonder whether he was subject to some decisive influence at the time he wrote *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). That particular kind of intensity was then rare enough, but manifest in two novels published from a Yorkshire parsonage in 1847. The great similarity between the characters of Chillingworth and Heathcliff would support a suggestion that Hawthorne was inspired in some degree by *Wuthering Heights*; and later we find a confession scene in *The Marble Faun* (1860) closely duplicating a similar scene in *Villette* (1852). Such influences are inevitable, and in writers of independent genius such as Hawthorne they are all to the good, opening out veins which would otherwise remain

Henry James then goes on to define very exactly the nature of this transmutation:

"Nothing is more curious and interesting than this almost exclusively *imported* character of the sense of sin in Hawthorne's mind; it seems to exist there merely for an artistic or literary purpose. He had ample cognizance of the Puritan conscience; it was his natural heritage; it was reproduced in him; looking into his soul, he found it there. But his relation to it was only, as one may say, intellectual; it was not moral and theological. He played with it and used it as a pigment; he treated it, as the metaphysicians say, objectively. He was not discomposed, disturbed, haunted by it, in the manner of its usual and regular victims, who had not the little postern door of fancy to slip through, to the other side of the wall. It was, indeed, to his imaginative vision, the great fact of man's nature; the light element that had been mingled with his own composition always clung to this rugged prominence of moral responsibility, like the mist that hovers about the mountain. It was a necessary condition for a man of Hawthorne's stock that if his imagination should take licence to amuse itself, it should at least select this grim precinct of the Puritan morality for its play-ground."

This is so truly expressed that it leaves little more to be said. But Hawthorne's example is one of very wide significance, and one that can benefit a generation which is singularly confused on the subject of the relationship of morality to art. Hawthorne was a "pure" artist in the modern sense — as "pure" as Poe or Landor, Flaubert or Mallarmé. And yet he was preoccupied with moral problems — as, to a great extent, was Flaubert also. The distinction is, of course, that he did not desire a solution of them — not a solution, at any

buried. In any case, such influences are not fruitful unless there is a prior aptitude in the author influenced.

rate, on the moral plane. His scorn of the self-concentrated philanthropist, and of the meddler in other people's affairs generally, is evident everywhere — but especially in *The Blithedale Romance*, which might have been written for the express purpose of making this attitude clear. The only agent he employed in his moral dramas was the conscience; and all his romances might be described as studies in remorse, which is conscience accusing itself. The extraordinary thing, above all in *The Scarlet Letter*, is the degree of intensity with which the theme is invested. Indeed, that is the extraordinary thing about Hawthorne altogether, and the one factor which more than any other inclines us to rank him as a major artist — the capacity, that is, which he has for putting an emotional emphasis into subjects so dispassionately conceived. The resulting art is "classical," but it is reached by the reverse of the normal classical procedure of putting a rational curb on to subjects emotionally conceived. The subjects are indeed "grim," but the imagination has thrown over them its own peculiar radiance and glory.

HERBERT READ

PICUS MARTIUS

Here lies the Woodpecker, who was Zeus

THOUGHTS of the Bird-Catcher,
Who caught the Woodpecker,
Once Zeus.

Remember:
Birds in stone, birds in clay, birds on coins,
The unsubstantial feathers made substantial
In Caria and Istria and Umbria,
In memory of the Woodpecker who was Zeus.
Because God had been a bird.

God like a bird,
'The same moon in Cameroon'
In dancing-places and sleeping places and bars,
Dressed-up like a man,
A too-bright creature perched a moment on your wrist.

Birds are born again,
The unsubstantial feathers made more airy
In flesh.

Recognise a bird in a man
That it is feathers, air
Not flesh.

PICUS MARTIUS

Catch it if you can,
Tie a thread to the transparent claw
And in the sensibility of honour
Untwist.

Sigismundo de Malatesta da Rimini
Was a master in this.
Because his name was magnificence:
Because of his pride,
Because of Madame Isotta,
Because he has nothing whatever to do with this.

Advice of the bird-catcher:
Consider;
The trouble brought by bird-lovers
On the lovers of birds
(Leda and Ganymede
Spring to the mind).
A bird-priestess wore the feathers of a king-fisher
In Elis of all places,
Next door to the palace of the Imperial patriarch Zeus-Pater,
No earthly sense in it but art.

Advice to Leda:
Ruffle your feathers out of the wood,
You cannot stay in with the bird-king.
Make your nest where you can
Lay phoenix eggs,
Turn the substantial shell to unsubstantial
Fire birds.
Meet the king who is neither a bird nor a man
In the easiest place,

Mother of the Dioscuri,
Apprentice — bird-catcher the bird picked up
To dance with and shoot craps and whistle out the night.

There is a feather-leash
From wrist to wrist,
A running-knot to tie
Those who have kissed
(Not poetry this
Pastiche on a past air.)

Il ne vient pas ce soir
(Make a tune of this)
Absent — le bien venu
Absent — le menu plaisir
De ce soir
Disparu.

Light tears of the Bird-catcher,
Who caught the Woodpecker, Picus Martius
Once Zeus.

You were an airy unsubstantial love,
But you were peace,
Peace for the Bird-catcher and his little friends
Famous in story.

Told:
Where the rocks are made of glass
And the sea of blue stone,
Where the trees are dry and grey
For bird-flash and dance,

PICUS MARTIUS

Where the fir-cone,
Ivy, briony
Trouble memory, the mother of the Muses,
The nine names of the imagination,
With a bird's feathers brushed in the moment of flight.

He said:
Steady Ganymede!
Careful Leda!
That bird was a god,
Was a man.

Zeus-Swan, Zeus-Eagle, Woodpecker-Zeus:
Old memories of the bird-catcher
Of the lovers of a bird,
And of Picus Martius
God — like — a — bird
Zeus.

MARY BUTTS

THE FALLACY OF HUMANISM

IF the necessity for virtue could tell us what it is and ensure its practice, the doctrine of the American Humanists would stand with the minimum of easy, even perfunctory revision. There is a general belief that this doctrine is fundamentally sound, and it is rejected, where it is rejected, because it is not "flexible" enough, or because it ignores contemporary literature, or because the Humanists lack the "æsthetic sense." Unhappily, however, Humanism is obscure as to its sources; it is even more ambiguous about the kind of authority to which it appeals. And yet all believers in reason, tradition, and authority, who are obviously disbelievers in impressionism, pure contemporaneity, and license — among whom this essayist numbers himself — will approach the writings of Messrs. Babbitt, More and Foerster with more than an open mind; they will have in advance the conviction that

> the rightful concern of man is his humanity, his world of value . . . that marks him off from a merely quantitative natural order;

but, after a great deal of patient reading, they will come away with that conviction — and with no more than that conviction. They will have got no specific ideas about values — that is to say, they will nave gained no technique for acquiring them; and such a technique, they will reflect, is morally identical with the values themselves. Values are not suspended in the air, to be plucked. They will reflect, suspiciously, that the vague method of Humanism resembles the vague method of the so-called Romantic in the very respect in which agreement or difference is fundamental: the Humanist pursues

Humanism for its own sake — or, say, restraint for restraint's sake, or proportion for proportion's sake — and while this is doubtless better than pursuing disorder for disorder's sake, the authority of the worthier pursuit is no clearer than that of the baser. They will decide, moreover, that this defect of the Humanist is a central one and that, critically examined, it will turn out to be the philosophical malady of the so-called naturalist. Doctrinal differences in themselves may be negligible; the man who supposes himself a naturalist may practice the Humanistic virtues (Montaigne): the Humanist in doctrine may exhibit the method of naturalism (More). But if the appearance of mere doctrine is deceptive, the operation of a technique cannot be. The Humanists have no technique. How, under the special complexities and distractions of the modern world, they intend to validate their values they do not say; they simple urge them. And this discrepancy between doctrine and method their hardier readers will find adequately described in Book II, Chapter IV, of the Nicomachean Ethics:

> . . . Yet people in general do not perform these actions, but taking refuge in talk they flatter themselves they are philosophizing, and that they will so be good men: acting in truth very like those sick people who listen to the doctor with great attention but do nothing that he tells them: just as these people cannot be well bodily under such a course of treatment, neither can those be mentally by such philosophizing.

The Humanists have listened not only to one doctor but to a great many doctors, and they tell us what they say; but they have not learned, and they cannot teach us, how to take the medicine.

I propose, in the first place, therefore, to analyze the position held by those Humanists in whom the minimum of doctrine appears: I mean by the minimum of doctrine that

their thought refuses to exceed the moralistic plane; they steadily repudiate all religious and philosophical support. The Humanists of this type are Babbitt and Foerster. Secondly, I shall try to discover how this Humanism differs, if it differ, from that of Mr. More, who appears to lean heavily upon religious values. Different as the religious and the non-religious brands of Humanism seem to be, they will turn out in the end to founder on the same reef. At the last, if Humanism shall save itself — that is to say, if it shall find a method — what is the position into which it will be logically driven?

I

The Humanism formulated by Mr. Norman Foerster in the last chapter of his *American Criticism* is actually a summary of the views of Professor Babbitt. Mr. Foerster adds nothing of his own, but he is more explicit than his master has ever been; he attempts an exact definition of his authorities. He no longer leaves it to the critic to infer the points of attack. An analysis of Foerster is, then, in all the essentials, an analysis of Babbitt. The assumptions of Humanism, according to Mr. Foerster, are as follows:

(1) ". . . that assumptions are necessary." Foerster points out the self-deception of the naturalist, or the anti-authoritarian, who thinks he has got rid of assumptions.

(2) ". . . that the essential elements of human experience are precisely those which appear to conflict with the reality explored by naturism. It [Humanism] recognizes, indeed, the service of naturism . . . in showing the power of the natural man's impulses."

(3) ". . . the central assumption of humanism is that of a dualism of man and nature . . . the rightful concern of man is his humanity, his world of value and quality that marks him off from a merely quantitative natural order."

(4) "Finally, humanism assumes the freedom of the will to con-

form to a standard of values, as opposed to the deterministic assumption of naturism."

From these assumptions Mr. Foerster proceeds to a doctrine which I reproduce in an abridged form:

(1) An adequate human standard calls for *completeness*. This includes "natural" human nature.

(2) But it also calls for *proportion*: it demands the harmony of the *parts with the whole* (italics mine).

(3) The complete, proportionate standard may be said to consist of the *normally or typically human.*

(4) Although such an ethos has never existed, it has been approximated in the great ages of *the past.* Foerster looks mainly to Greece, but he includes the Romans, Vergil and Horace; the Christians, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, others; the Orientals, Buddha and Confucius; the moderns, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe. (But he has misgivings about Shakespeare.)

(5) Unlike Romanticism, Humanism is true to its Hellenic origin in its faith in *reason.* It seeks to deal positively with the whole of human experience, including those elements of experience that do *not* fall within the scope of what is termed science.

(6) Unlike the conceptions of life that grow out of science, humanism seeks to press beyond reason by the use of *intuition* or *imagination* . . . the human or ethical imagination, as distinguished from the natural or pathetic imagination, which is below the reason.

(7) The ultimate ethical principle is that of restraint or control.

(8) This centre to which Humanism refers everything . . . is the reality that gives rise to religion. But pure Humanism is content to describe it *in physical terms* . . . it hesitates to pass beyond its experimental knowledge to the dogmatic affirmations of any of the great religions . . . it holds that *supernatural revelation must be tested by the intellect* . . . it should be clear that Humanism, like Greek philosophy, *begins with science* and *not* with religion.

The assumptions and the conclusions of Mr. Foerster's Humanism I have given in some detail so that the reader may, by

the merest inspection, see for himself the jungle of vague definition and contradiction in which the Humanist program is lost.

Mr. Foerster says that human values are those which *appear* to conflict (do they or do they not?) with the reality explored by naturism; and yet Humanism demands the cultivation of all human nature, including "natural" human nature. He says, too, that Humanism rejects the elements of experience that fall within the "scope of what is termed science." Can it cultivate them and reject them at the same time? However this may be, Humanism puts its faith in reason (because of its Hellenic origin) and it is based upon science, and yet it is unlike the conceptions of life that grow out of science. It demands a dualism of man and nature opposed to the monistic assumption of naturism; but how, it may be asked, is this dualism to be preserved along with that other requirement of a "harmony of the parts with the whole"? Mr. Foerster has just denounced the monistic whole. And, further, it may be asked, upon which side of the duality does reason take its stand? If science is naturism, and reason science, the question answers itself. Humanism is based upon science, which is naturism, and yet it is unlike the conceptions of life that grow out of science. And here it may be asked upon which science Mr. Foerster performs his miracle of accepting rejection? Is it just *science*? Or is it a *Weltanschauung* whose vision of reality is mechanism, a popular version of genuine science? In this case, it is the quantitative natural order of which he speaks; but how did it get quantified? Is it *naturally* quantified? The only plausible answer is that it was quantified by Mr. Foerster's kind of reason, but that he is so unaware of this that he can, with an effective "chaser" handy, drink "reason" off neat.

The chaser is the "ethical imagination," which presses be-

yond reason. We have seen that he puts his faith in reason, and it is difficult to see why he wishes a faith beyond faith, or why he selects this particular super-faith: he refuses to press beyond reason in favour of religion.

His desire to go beyond reason is his desire to escape from naturalism, and his conception of reason is disastrously contradictory. The mere desire to get out of gaol will not unlock the gate, and you remain a prisoner: Mr. Foerster remains a naturalist. He says that "supernatural intuition" — the phrase smacks of romantic Bergsonism — must be tested by the intellect. This is the naturalistic, eighteenth-century "rationalistic," conception of religion: irrational constructions of reality which "reason" (naturalism) may break down and reject. When Mr. Foerster says that religion must be tested by the intellect, he therefore means by naturalism. For naturalism contains the only idea of reason that is available to the Humanist.

If this were not true, the Humanist would not be forced to exceed it. Mr. Foerster is a century behind the thought of his age: he is a romantic post-Kantian who can find no way out of mechanism except intellectual suicide. (The *thought* of the age is *not* naturalistic.) This intellectual suicide was the ethical imagination which Schiller found to be the only way out of scientism, and its origin is betrayed by Schiller's description of it as the ideal representation of Causality. The difficulty for Mr. Foerster and Schiller is the question, How is this moral imagination to get moralized? You get nowhere by saying that the ethical imagination is above the reason, the pathetic imagination below; you have first to give them a motive for being what they are; without this you have a logical hypostasy, and the above and the below become, as any professor of logic will tell you, "picture-thinking."

Mr. Foerster will have to decide to be scientifically reasonable, or not to be scientifically reasonable; whether he wants the parts to harmonize with the whole, or whether he rejects the whole for a dualism of the parts. He cannot have reason checking the natural and still keep it natural. Unless he can make up his mind, his dualism is merely verbal; for he is expecting naturalism to un-naturalize itself—or, in other words, the imagination to make itself moral.

But perhaps, after all, he has a way out: he holds an unplayed card and it may be an ace. The ultimate ethical principle is restraint or control, and the motivation of the ethical imagination is restraint; or at least it acts under the influence of restraint for the creation, it seems, of the "normally or typically human." This is the ideal towards which Humanism strives, having based its effort upon the ancient approximations to the ideal. But, if the ethical imagination is the instrument for creating the normally or typically human, what is its motive for doing so? Is it restraint? Or can you say, Because it is ethical? Or, perhaps, that the restraint restrains? This will not do. You have got to refer to certain prior conditions under which an ethical imagination is possible. However wicked the personal life of Villon may have been, his imagination, under the conditions of the time, was bound to be ethical because it had an authority for being; it could not escape this authority in some form.

These conditions are by no means fulfilled by recourse to Sophocles, to Vergil, to Augustine, or to a mixture of these writers taken alone. You cannot get out of them a "philosophy" or a "religion"; literature is no substitute for religion, or for its defence, philosophy. It is this vague understanding on the part of the Humanists of the nature of philosophy, it is their lack of an exact logical and philosophical discipline,

which betrays them not only into the muddy reasoning that we have just seen; it leads them to expect to find in literature, ancient or modern, an explicit philosophy sufficient unto itself — a philosophy, in short, that does not already exist in some purer, instead of a derived and literary form. You may as well burn the *Summa* and study Aquinas, *as Aquinas*, in Dante. The Humanist idea of philosophy and of literature is confused; and both, in their hands, as we shall see, are corrupt.

The belief held at various times since the Renaissance that the ancients are models of attitude and value was an innocent and useful delusion; it was useful so long as it was not necessary to expose it — so long, in fact, as the ancients could be assimilated to an already existing centre of authority. Without this centre you get eclecticism; you get Professor Babbitt. The sole defence of eclecticism is naturalistic — that is to say, it rests upon the ability of the individual mind mechanically to combine, upon a *tabula rasa*, a variety of unlike elements into a unity. We know that mechanical interaction (were it possible) could not yield a whole, but an aggregate. Humanism, lacking a centre, is an aggregate; it expects Sophocles and Vergil to fuse without the action of some prior principle of unity: you could as well get a philosophy out of Racine and Alexander Pope, or Coleridge and Austin Dobson. The Humanist conception of literature is mechanical and naturalistic.

Its idea of the past is infinite regression. When it is asked for authority, it is constantly driven back from one position to another. We arrive at last at the "wisdom of the ages," but are we sure that this wisdom can be assimilated, evaluated, by a mind that has no authority for being wise? Professor Babbitt is learned, and he seems to be wise, but for the latter we have only his word for it.

The idea of infinite regression to authority inheres in all

Humanist thought, and it is probably the subtlest fallacy to which it is committed. In the first place, it takes all the *time* out of the past. Obviously the Humanists do not consciously involve themselves in such an error. What they do perform is an unconscious transformation of the idea of an increasingly distant temporal past into the idea of a logical series which is quite timeless. This is another pitfall of picture-thinking: time is confused with logical succession which, of course, may run in any "direction" or all directions at once. The Humanist thus convinces himself that his logical series is a temporal past, and, as such, contains a stopping-place, some fixed doctrine, an external authority. But there can be no absolute in a logical series because all its terms are equal and it never ends. Logical series is quantitative, the abstraction of space. The temporal series is, on the other hand, space concrete; it may end, for persons in the West, with Christ. Concrete, temporal experience implies the existence of a temporal past, and it is the foundation of religion; that is to say, the only way to think of the past independently of Mr. Foerster's naturalism is to think religiously; and, conversely, the only way to think religiously is to think in time.[1] Naturalistic science is timeless.[2] A doctrine based upon it, whether explicitly or not, can have no past, no idea of tradition, no fixed authority. The "typically human" is a term that cannot exist apart from some other term; it is not an absolute; it is fluid and unfixed.

[1] Mr. Wyndham Lewis understands this, but his Time fiends are really Space fiends. If his reader will go through his books, and change Space to Time, Time to Space, he will get what Mr. Lewis really means.

[2] Mr. Foerster (*American Criticism*, p. 238, footnote) says: "Science measures . . . phenomenal happenings viewed in retrospect." Since Mr. Foerster lacks the first elementary idea of the method of science, it is no wonder that he is caught in its assumptions. The fundamental concept of natural science is the Law of Reversible Action: every natural occurrence can, under the same conditions, be repeated; events are never lost in the passing of concrete time; there are no events in retrospect or in prospect; there is simply timeless process.

The "historical method," says Mr. Foerster, rose in the age of naturalism, but he wishes to keep it as a valuable adjunct to Humanism. This may be due to his fallacy in the concept of reason; or it may be that he does not wish to embarrass the American academic system, to which he belongs. His hope, however, that Humanism may rise upon its own débris is another instance of naturalism unnaturalizing itself. Men cannot be naturalists with one half of the mind, Humanists with the other; or does Mr. Foerster desire the growth of two coöperating classes — naturalists and Humanists? The convictions of the one class are bound to undermine those of the other. The "historical method" has always been the anti-historical method. Its aim is to contemporize the past. Its real effect is to de-temporize it. The past becomes a causal series and timeless; and as a quantitative abstraction (as Foerster himself sees) valueless. Are we to infer that, after the historical naturalists have done their work, the Humanist will intercede and evaluate? This is the Victorian illusion all over again — that good may somehow be the "goal of ill."

Professor Babbitt has acutely charged the experimental moderns with not being experimental enough — they have not, he says, questioned the assumptions of their time, but swallowed them whole. He himself continues to experiment, but, as Mr. Eliot has pointed out, we cannot go on experimenting indefinitely. The reason why Professor Babbitt remains an inveterate experimenter is that he, in his turn, has not been philosophical enough. The Socratic method, which he, and Mr. Foerster after him, apply so ably to contemporary society, is a method only, and it may be used by the Humanist and his enemy alike. Torn out of the Platonic Dialogues, it is an instrument for the exposure of contradiction; it brings with it no motive for the exposure; it yields no ab-

solutes. This will be clearer in an analysis of the Humanism of Paul Elmer More.

II

If Professor Babbitt's Humanism is eclectic, Mr. More's is equally so — but the apparent synthesis takes place on the religious plane. Humanists like Babbitt and Foerster have to meet the problem of access to truth beyond the personality: it is obvious that Babbitt, in some sense, is a sound man, that his views are sound because he is; but there is no other guarantee of the soundness of his views. He is a "personality," and there is nothing to do about personality but to feel that it is sound or unsound. Mr. More, however, compels us to answer the question: Is his religion sound or unsound?

The problem is harder than that of personality, but in the end it is the same. What, in the first place, is Mr. More's religion? Is it Christianity? It is possible that it is. He has written time and again about the insight afforded us by Christian writers, and to them he has brought no inconsiderable insight of his own. There is also, according to Mr. More, a profound insight in Plato—perhaps the profoundest. Again, his studies in the Hindu religions and philosophies have stimulated him to some of his best and most sympathetic writing: the Hindus teach a deep religious dualism. Mr. More's *Studies in Religious Dualism* is a kind of breviary of the good he finds in half a dozen or more religious attitudes. The question remains: which of these religions is Mr More's? The answer to this, I believe, is: Mr. More's religion is Mr. More's.

He has written a great deal on religion, but it is not easy to put one's finger on his idea of it. The truth is simply that his explicit statements on the subject tend to be vague — some-

thing like pulpit rhetoric. And yet he does have definite ideas. But their most significant expression is in incidental remarks, when he is off his guard. About twenty years ago he took to task an interpreter of the Forest Philosophers for trying

> to convert into hard intellectualism what was at bottom a religious and thoroughly human experience.

Is intellectualism hard (or soft) incompatible with religion? If the experience was thoroughly human, was it also religious? Mr. More thinks that it was. If intellectualism has no place in religion, where does it belong? Mr. More's reply to this is undoubtedly Mr. Foerster's conception of reason: reason is the exclusive privilege of what the Humanists call naturism. Religion is an indefinite, unutterable belief. Mr. More, as well as Babbitt and Foerster, cannot get out of this notion of reason. Now, if religion is not allowed to reason, what may it do? Shall it be contented with visions? I think that Mr. More would say no; but he could not rationally say it. Mr. More repeats the dilemma (which is very different from a dualism) of Messrs. Babbitt and Foerster; you have on the one hand scientific naturalism; on the other, irrational belief — the "illusion of a higher reality"[3] which is only an illusion. This is the familiar doctrine of the *philosophe* that religion is an aberration of the intellect — an aberration of naturalism. Mr. More would say that the religious and the human join in opposing the natural. But if the religious and the human join, in the present state of the religious, you are opposing naturalism with opposition, or at best with itself. You cannot overcome naturalism with an illusion of higher reality; the illusion is a property of the thing to be overcome. In spite of Mr. More's religious attitude, the objections to Professor Bab-

[3] The phrase is Goethe's, who used it in a different sense.

bitt and Mr. Foerster apply to him. This is because Mr. More's religion is only Mr. More's.

He gives, in the first chapter of *Studies in Religious Dualism*, something of his religious history up to that time (1909). He had repudiated Calvanism; he was drifting; but suddenly he found a book that initiated him into the "mysteries of independent faith" — the kind of faith, it will be observed, that the detested romantic, the naturist, the Rousseauist, or what you will, has argued for all the time. Calvanism, it seems, was not independent enough, and yet no faith was too independent. Now, just how much independence was necessary? Mr. More had to make his decision unassisted, and he had no rational means of knowing when he had come to a stop. It comes down, I suppose, to some sort of belief in God, which Mr. More shares with the hero of *Vathek*, Lord Byron, and Shelley.[4]

[4] That this is the chief issue of Mr. More's thinking I have been able to infer from the great bulk of his miscellaneous writings on religion. The correctness of my inference is now explicitly confirmed by Mr. More himself in an essay entitled "An Absolute and an Authoritative Church," *The Criterion*, July, 1929. Mr. More, harrassed by the "Demon of the Absolute," tries to find religious authority apart from the Protestant claim of infallibility for the Biblical texts, on the one hand, and, on the other, from the Roman claim of absolute interpretation of these texts. He asks both of these absolute and presumably erring parties some very shrewd questions, which he believes to be most adequately answered by the Greek and the Anglican Churches—"the kind of revelation which neither in book nor in Church is absolute, but in both book and Church possesses a sufficient authority." I am not concerned with the merit of any Church, but with the idea of Mr. More's authority, which he fails to make clear. He admits that his idea may bring "the reproach of uncertainty," but any sensible reader will sympathize with this if Mr. More's uncertain faith also bring him consolation; and yet the sympathetic reader will have to conclude that this is only an explicit statement of his persistently "independent faith." The value of this new essay is, in short, that of a summary of Mr. More's religious thought; its distinction is the fearless and forthright honesty of his discussion; for otherwise it ends in vague appreciation of tradition tempered by individualism. The dilemma of absolutes remains untouched because, however sound Mr. More's impulse may be, he seems to lack the philosophical equipment to *think* himself round his dilemma.

His critics have accused him of defect in the "æsthetic sense"; he has seemed to be preoccupied with the content of literature; he has little to say of style, almost nothing, except what he says impatiently, of the craft of writing from the point of view of the writer. He never permits us to forget his conviction that the problems of craft are secondary and "æsthetic" and that, if the writer is virtuous, his writing will take care of itself. The reply to this is not that such confusion of thought is unworthy of Mr. More — which it is. It is not enough to oppose to it an equal confusion — that his is due to a lack of æsthetic perception. His failure to understand the fundamental significance of style explains his failure to understand most of the literature that he has read. It is his intention to extract from any given book the doctrine that coincides with his own. We have just seen that it is difficult to find out what Mr. More's doctrine is. With what is literature, then, to coincide? Mr. More entertains false hopes of literature; he expects it to be a philosophy and a religion because, in his state of "independent faith," he has neither a final religion nor a final philosophy prior to the book which he happens to be reading.

In his most recent volume, *The Demon of the Absolute,* he remarks, somewhat complacently, that he is not concerned with artistic means; only with "results." This distinction runs all through Mr. More's writings: he is not concerned with the letter of religion, the means through which it exists and is preserved — the religion itself. Religious results, separate from religious means, become — if they become anything — independent faith. Such a faith is incommunicable; it lacks the means of communication. When Mr. More tells us that a writer has a sound moral attitude, he may be right, but there is no reason to believe that he may not be wrong.

His judgments, for us, are thus neither right nor wrong: they are meaningless; there is not an ounce of authority for one of them. He cannot cite his independent faith; it is rationally inarticulate; there is no way to communicate it.

Nevertheless, Mr. More evidently supposes that he is conveying it; else he would not continue to write books. His reasons for this supposition not only command attention; they are of great interest in themselves. Mr. More is, among other things, a Platonist. What is a Platonist? Is he a man who believes what Plato believed? Or is he a man who uses the Socratic method for the exposure of contradiction? If he is the latter, to what end does he expose contradiction? Since Mr. More obviously believes things that Plato did not, he is, if he be a Platonist at all, one by virtue of his use of the Socratic method. But why does he use it? There is only one answer: for the support of independent faith. He is a Platonist only in the sense in which all men are said to be either Aristotelians or Platonists.

And yet he constantly draws upon Plato for quotations and analogies (he has written a book on the subject); he has the air of delivering his opinions from quoted authority. But owing to the distracting influence of the other authorities — Christ, the Forest Philosophers — which compose his independent faith, it is difficult to ascertain just how authoritative, at a given moment, Plato is.[5] The real authority at all times,

[5] This would be difficult if Mr. More quoted Plato alone. Plato's method not being formal and abstract (personal) but allegorical and symbolic (dramatic), critics have always unloaded upon his lack of system a private system of their own: Mr. More is not the first to do it. With More, it is difficult to decide who is speaking, More or Plato, but the question must usually be answered in favor of More. An interesting feature of Mr. More's devotion to Plato is the former's almost stubborn belief in "common sense" and the latter's rejection of it. Mr. More seems to ignore this inconsistency. Plato does not *demand* exact thinking of the reader, who *may* come away without knowing if he has done more than follow an argument or unravel an allegory.

of course, is Mr. More. I need hardly point out that Mr. More logically drives himself into the position of spiritual exile and, if he speak at all, of arrogance to which he has consigned the romantic enemy.

The belief in the authority of Plato when More is the actual authority explains the poor quality of his literary judgments. Moral judgments are never more irresponsible than when the judge deludes himself into thinking that the high and mighty of the past are behind him. Mr. More is a man whose moral habits are not subject to the purification and correction of a specific external authority, and the delusion that they are only increases their irresponsibility. In the name of restraint he is able to evoke the limit of his personal distastes.

Mr. More's fallacy is identical, as I have said, with that of the non-religious Humanists.[6] Because he cannot find an adequate conception of concrete tradition (experience) in terms of authority (reason), he gives us abstract, timeless, rootless, habitual ideas that closely resemble, in structure, the universe of the naturists; authority in More becomes the spectral sorites of infinite regress. There is no conception of religion as preserved, organized experience; you have a mechanism of moral ideas. Take this passage by Mr. More:

> True art is humanistic rather than naturalistic; and its gift of high and permanent pleasure is the response of our own breast to the artist's delicately revealed sense of that divine control moving like the spirit of God upon the face of the waters.
>
> So far I seem to see my way clear. If you should ask me by what rhetorical devices or by what instrument of representation one poem . . . appeals more successfully than another to the higher faculty within us, how, for instance, Milton's *Paradise Lost* accomplishes

[6] When this essay appeared in *The Criterion* (July, 1929) I had not read Mr. More's *Christ the Word*, the fifth volume of his well-known work called

this end better than Blackmore's *King Arthur*, though *both poems were written with equally good intentions* (italics mine), I would reply frankly that the solution of this problem of the imagination may be beyond my powers of critical analysis.

The first part of this passage is a fair example of the pulpit rhetoric into which Mr. More plunges when he speaks of the relation of literature to religion, and the reason why his thought is vague is that, like Professor Babbitt, he has not been philosophical enough; he has not examined his own assumptions. It is difficult to distinguish, in the above quotation, any reason why true art is Humanistic; for the "high and permanent pleasure" and "the divine control" are only pleasant ways of saying mechanical habits of thought. Mr. More has never philosophized his ideas into ultimates — those fixed yet interpretative flexible positions from the viewpoint of which the ghost of naturalism and the otherwise disembodied spirit of morality become, not things, but descriptions of tendencies in the life of men. As Mr. Eliot has pointed out in the case of Babbitt, More ignores the conditions out of

"The Greek Tradition." I am not competent to judge the scholarship of *Christ the Word* — the sole title in his voluminous writings that I had not read — but a careful reading, in the light of his recent essay in *The Criterion* (see note, p. 672), which I understand is part of the final volume on The Greek Tradition, makes clear two things, and confirms my argument: (1) Mr. More is dissatisfied with the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of the Church, and (2) he is dissatisfied with it because it will not let him be in it and cling to his independent faith at the same time. Therefore: he argues that the true tradition is Plato, whose lack of system goes well with primitive Christianity, and that the Church sold out to the Demon of the Absolute — Abstraction, or Reason — when it let Aristotle in. So far, this is only a restatement of the view of many Protestant writers; the next step is that the Eastern Church is free of the taint of reason and thus better than the Western. This may or may not be true, and Mr. More may or may not be a communicant of the Eastern Church. If he is, his readers will wish him well; if he is not and does not intend to become one, his readers will continue to wish him well—knowing that he must either found a religion of his own or keep up his present academic exercises in religious history. It will be up to Mr. More to decide which course is the better way of affirming his independent faith.

which a book emerges; these conditions alone realize the author's ideas; they alone contribute morality, not an abstract, but a specific morality in terms of experience, to the work of literature. More cannot tell us why Milton is superior to Blackmore because his sole idea of the mind is that of a mechanism of moral ideas. The intentions of the two poems being equally good, he cannot understand why their equal morality does not moralize the pieces into an equal excellence; because moral ideas are *things* they ought to be as efficient one place as another. Mr. More conceives literature, first, as a mechanism of ideas; then, as a mechanism of books themselves; literature is a timeless, self-perpetuating machine set in motion in an infinite past which is no past at all. To be another Dante you have only to believe that his ideas, his "results," are good, and to identify them in some undefined sense with your own moral habits.

Mr. More's doctrine is morality for morality's sake, and if art for art's sake has always been an outrage upon reason, his position is no less so. There is little rationally to choose between them.

His view of style as rhetorical devices is, then, perfectly consistent: they have no necessary connection with what is being said; like morality, they simply exist. Morality being automatically moral, moral values are moral before they are communicated; the style merely dresses them up. But how can there be abstract results apart from the means — apart from the medium which, under *temporal* conditions, fixes the values in experience? Style — the way values are apprehended — is the technique for validating them. Mr. More's theory logically ends in never uttering another word.

Because he cannot take the philosophical view he sees naturalism as the worship of instinct, license, self — all the

things, in fact, that a respectable citizen of the United States, for reasons of social habit, would not permit himself to do. No one in his senses would deny that François Villon was a person of instinct, that he was pitiably engrossed in his own self, that he was a licentious fellow; no one in his senses would call François Villon a naturalist. The point at issue lies where Humanism cannot take hold of it. For Naturalism is not a thing, nor several things; it is an intellectual focus, getting intenser since the seventeenth century, prior to certain habits of thinking and of conduct. The anti-naturalist is still a naturalist if he cannot get off his naturalistic plane; More is one because he presents a mechanical view of experience. A doctrine is not a method, and until it can be made one, the Humanists are "flattering themselves they are philosophizing, and that they will so be good men."

III

What is a technique for the realization and preservation of values? How shall we know when we have values? —a more difficult problem than the mere conviction that we need them. There is no such thing as pure value, nor are their values separate from the means of creating and preserving them. There are certain definite ways in which men have had access to value in the past (the Humanists tell us that Dante had values, but not how he got them); but our problem is, Have we any of those ways now? If we have, how may they be used? Is there a condition or are there several conditions that must be met before we may use them?

We have seen the assumptions of the Humanists. The assumptions of this essay are that Humanism is not enough, and that if the values for which the Humanist pleads are to be

made rational, even intelligible, the prior condition of an objective religion is necessary. There is only one necessary religion, as Mr. Eliot has said, for men in the West; this was clear to the anti-authoritarian mind of William James as well. It must be understood that this essay urges the claim of no particular Western church, and it is in no sense a confession of faith; but the connection between the Reformation and Naturalism, and what I conceive authority to be, define the position that the Humanists must occupy if they wish to escape intellectual suicide. Religion is the sole technique for the validating of values.

Why is it? The virtue of religion is its successful representation of the problem of evil. We have seen how Mr. Foerster, wishing at once to cultivate natural human nature and to reject it, could not decide how far he cared to go in either direction; this was because his dualism was verbal; there were no really opposed principles; there was simply an infinite number of points on the same scale. And thus his opposition between Quality and Quantity was verbal also; it was Quantity versus Quantity, presided over by rootless Restraint, the referee who checked nothing but coherent thought.

There is a preliminary question to be asked, which it does not seem to occur to the Humanists to ask. They tell us that somehow we have to do with Quality, but since, for them, nature is the quantified nature of scientism and the mind is a quantified machine of moral ideas, it is difficult to see where Quality comes from.[7] The preliminary question, then, is: What is the source of qualitative experience? Both horns of his dualism being reduced to Quantity, the Humanist cannot tell us; and that is why much of his criticism gives you the

[7] The Humanists use the term "quality" at the same philosophical level as a fashionable tailor would use it.

feeling that he expects you to pluck values out of the air. Since the Humanist has not been philosophically hardy enough to work out of the naturalistic version of nature (which he naively accepts), since, in fact, he cannot root the concept of nature as Quantity out of his mind, his idea of Quality is irresponsible, foot-loose, highly transcendental in a kind of Concord sense.

The source of Quality is nature itself because it is the source of experience. It is only by holding to an idea that leaves nature an open realm of Quality that experience is possible at all; and, conversely, experience alone is the road to Quality. If an American zoölogist seeks a certain Philippine cobra he doubtless says, "*Naja samaransis*"; the snake is merely an instance of the quantification of nature. The head-hunter, however, has a vivider feeling for the unique possibilities of the particular cobra; it may bite him; it may give him the evil eye — both richly qualitative experiences. For the Humanist, *opposing* Quality to nature, has got it on the wrong side of his duality. Pure Quality would be pure evil, and it is only through the means of our recovery from a lasting immersion in it, it is only by maintaining the precarious balance upon the point of collapse into Quality, that any man survives his present hour; pure quality is pure disintegration. The scientist says, "*Naja samaransis*"; Mr. More, a cadence of the same theme — "Immoral"; Quality is quantified before we ever see it as Quality; and nature becomes a closed system of abstraction in which man is deprived of all experience whatever and, by being so deprived, reduced to an abstraction himself.

The religious attitude is the very sense, the religious dogma the definition, of the precarious balance of man upon the brink of pure Quality. But if you never have Quality, never

have the challenge of evil, you have no religion — which is to say, you have no experience either. It is experience, immediate and traditional fused — Quality and Quantity — which is the means of validating values; experience gives the focus to style. Rhetorical device is our abstract term for properties of style after style is achieved; they have never of themselves made one poem better than another.

Religion's respect for the power of nature lies in her contempt for knowledge of it; to quantify nature is ultimately to quantify ourselves. Religion is satisfied with the dogma that nature is evil, and that our recovery from it is mysterious ("grace"). For the abstraction of nature ends, as we have seen, with the destruction of the reality of time, and immediate experience being impossible, so do all ideas of tradition and inherited order become timeless and incoherent. It is the indispensable office of religion that it checks the abstracting tendency of the intellect in the presence of nature; nature abstract becomes man abstract, and he is at last condemned to a permanent immersion in pure and evil Quality; he is forever condemned to it because he can no longer see it for what it is. The protection of religion is the abstraction, not of nature, which so conceived would be the abstraction of abstraction, but of experience. It proposes a system of Quantity *against* nature; it is a quantitative version of the encounter between the head-hunter and the cobra; but it says nothing about the cobra-in-itself. The organized meaning of the encounters of man and nature, which are temporal and concrete, is religious tradition, and its defence is dogma. The dogma acts for the recoil of the native from the snake: it is his technique for finding out the value of the encounter. Every such encounter is rich and unique in Quality: it is the temporal, never recurring focus, the new triumph, the re-affirmation of

the preserved experience of man. The modern Humanist, because of habitual reactions, recoils, but he has no reason for doing so, and his recoil is without value. He and the snake are one: Quantity versus Quantity; nature against nature; snake against snake; or, for that matter, man against man.

It is the failure of the Humanist to get out of this dilemma which makes his literary criticism feeble and incomplete. Mr. Foerster says: "It is best to face the issue in all candour" — the issue being Shakespeare. This poet merely "presents" life; he does not "interpret" it. If I had never read Shakespeare and had not read the rest of Mr. Foerster's book, his distinction would sound plausible; but having read his book, I know what he means which is something very different from what he thinks he means. He means that the mind of Shakespeare was not a mechanism of moral ideas. The Humanists quarrel with literature because it cannot give them a philosophy and a church; but they keep turning to literature because they cannot find these things elsewhere. You cannot have the sense of literature without the prior and specific sense of something else. Without this you expect too much of literature; you expect of it a religion and a philosophy; and by expecting of it the wrong thing, you violate it, and in the end you get from it less than it is meant to yield; you get neither literature nor religion, nor anything that is intelligible. You destroy literature without constructing a religion.

The infinite Quality in nature mysteriously assailing the available experience of man is the theme of tragedy; the struggle for preservation against disintegrating Quality is the meaning of religion. The dependent ideas, religion and tragedy, are eqally incomprehensible to the Humanists and to their enemies, Zola, Rimbaud, and Mr. Sinclair Lewis. Shakespeare, says Mr. Foerster, must go — "despite the im-

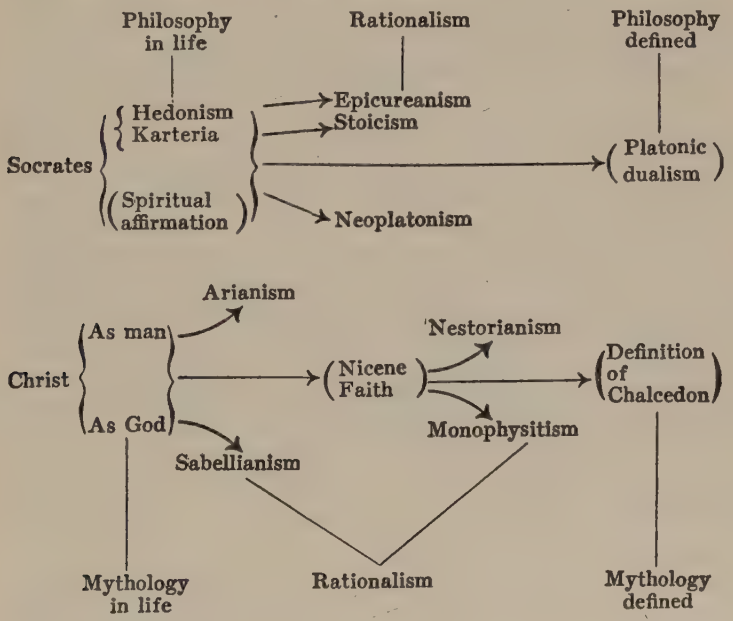
pressive development of his mind and art." What is development of mind and art? I do not know. Neither does Mr. Foerster.

ALLEN TATE

We think it only fair to Mr. Tate and to Mr. More to quote the following pages from *Christ the Word* which are most pertinent to Mr. Tate's discussion.

THE EDITORS

"It should seem therefore that our only choice lies between a reasonable philosophy based on an irrational paradox and an unreasonable metaphysic based on a rational presumption. And I cannot see how the like alternative can be avoided in the attitude we take towards the contending claims of an orthodox philosophy and an heritical metaphysic in the dogmas of religion. The parallel may be presented to the eye schematically as follows, with the proviso, however, that it aims only at a rough approximation to the facts:"



"But individually, and on its negative side, each of these major heresies was a blow levelled at the very spirit of faith and worship which it sought to elucidate, in the one case by slurring over the functions of the Saviour as representative of the human race, in the other case by clouding his mission as revealer of God. More than that — and the point I would now make would be clearer if the innumerable subsidiary heresies had been brought into our survey — in the period under consideration every possible means of reconciling the Incarnation, that 'thing truly paradoxical' as Athanasius admitted, with the monistic demands of reason had been tried, and all had ended in logical confusion and moral disaster. The time had come to call a halt. The constructive work of the Greek intelligence had been accomplished, once for all; the centrifugal force of the Greek character threatened to dissipate religion into endless factions. There was needed just such a statement of orthodoxy as that provided by Chalcedon — a formula which, in hard, precise, immitigable terms, should set a check upon the claims of reason to extend the faith in one direction to the exclusion of the other. It had come to this pass: either the central fact of Christianity had to be abandoned, or such claims of reason had to be transcended. You may rationally reverence Christ as an inspired man (at least you may if you do not inquire too curiously into the meaning of inspiration), or you may rationally (if it so pleases your fancy) dissolve an event of history into a fiction of the mythopoeic imagination, and to one or the other of these extremes or the heresies were inevitably sloping; you cannot rationally worship the incarnate Saviour, as both the orthodox and all but the most intransigent heretics understand worship.

"Such an admission may be painful, even humiliating. But, after all, the dogma of the Incarnation is no whit more irrational than the dualism which meets us at every turn of our inquiry into the nature of things, — *e.g.* than the incomprehensible junction of body and mind with which every act of our life makes us familiar, and against which the endeavours of a rationalizing psychology break down invariably in wanton disregard of facts or in gross abuse of logic.[8] The analogy, I may add, was clearly perceived by the theologians of the faith fifteen hundred years ago, and was even embodied in the creed improperly attributed to Athanasius: '*As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ.*' However our pride of intellect may rebel, there can be no intelligent attitude towards the greater problems of existence until we have learned that reason, though it may be the pragmatic guide of conduct, is not the source of knowledge or even the final test of truth. The question put to the soul of each man is not whether the primary tenet of Christianity has the kind of consistency demanded by logic, but whether it corresponds with the lessons and surest intuitions of spiritual experience."

[8] This argument I have developed in the first chapter of *The Christ of the New Testament.*

BOOK REVIEWS

THE BRUSHWOOD BOY AT THE FRONT

A Farewell to Arms. *By Ernest Hemingway. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1929. $2.50.

Hemingway's strongest and most moving writing is still in *Men Without Women.* In those short stories of gunmen, prizefighters, drug addicts, and bullfighters, he was entirely without self-consciousness, unevasively absorbed by the creation of figures in which he found something to admire and much to pity. He projected them confidently out of himself, and these creatures of his imagination stood like models while he drew them firmly, surely, carefully, divining and surprising their most secret changes of countenance and most characteristic movements. The present novel, although in matters relating to "mere" writing and the organization of materials it marks an advance upon the author's earlier work, is fundamentally retrograde: it represents a return to his uneasy concern with himself.[1] While the novel was being published serially in *Scribner's,* there was repeated protest in the chit-chat department at the back of that magazine to the effect that this was emphatically not an autobiographical novel. This protest (accompanied — so vulgar is the practice of our publishers — by references to Hemingway's Italian war cross and photographs of the author in skiing costume), this protest despite, the novel gives off an odour of autobiography.

Every fictional composition is of course a compound of experience. But the motive of experience and the motive of art are not the same: we endure experience for ourselves, whereas we re-create it for others,

[1] I do not need to insist that I mean this in no common way. With a sobriety of comportment which all of his contemporaries might envy, and most of them be counselled to emulate, Hemingway has scrupulously disdained the bays with which he would so hysterically be crowned at New York literary "teas."

for an imagined and ideally comprehending reader. An experience, and the emotion which accompanies it, are unimportant except to him who is experiencing, for the reason that they are not being shared; and to be made art, there must be injected into the experience a different, indeed a superior sort of emotion, the emotion of the artist over and above that of the protagonist. It is the artist's emotion (not the protagonist's) that we are able to share, and it is likely that the measure of sincerity and seriousness in art, may very well be merely the depth and the genuineness of the artist's emotion. In certain episodes of *A Farewell to Arms* the impression is irresistible that the author has endeavoured not to reveal or traduce emotions he has experienced, while yet retaining the episodic *cadre* of experience, and in so doing he has been forced to substitute sensation for emotion. In a superficial formula, instead of detaching Frederic and Catherine from himself — the artist's creative gesture — he has detached himself from them, in the gesture of the observer. Born of a desire to evade the autobiographical, there was in him a curious *will to not-create*. The contrary will produced *Men Without Women*; it gave us all the figures save that of Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises*: the will manifest in *A Farewell to Arms* is one which Hemingway cannot be urged too strongly to defeat.

If we examine this will in the light of the data afforded by *A Farewell to Arms* we find at bottom, I believe, a phenomenon which is at once an ideal and a fear: the ideal is that of our boyhood friend the Redskin; the fear is the fear of displaying emotion. We have had the ideal before, in, for example, novels of the Wild West (I doubt that Homer's heroes refrained from crying out when they were in pain); but I do not know an age before our own in which it could be understood that such an ideal might be accompanied by such a fear. In Hemingway's novel, the Brave is not afraid of war, and the Squaw does not flinch at the thought of birth pangs. The story of their young love in the spring of the year is swiftly told, for most of us reminiscentially stirring, and for the young a simulacrum of Tristan and Iseut. Frederic is a somewhat morose young man, and Catherine is a rather desperately happy young woman. He, the male, is served and adored and complacently spreads his peacock tail before her who serves and adores. Beyond this there is no discernible difference between them: they are wraiths, *deux formes* qui *ont tout à*

l'heure passé. Our knowledge of them is limited to their sensations. There is no need that we be shown conflict *between* them (though one has the impression that a woman would find it hard to live nine or ten months with the Frederic of this novel and not have been pretty well tortured by him); but of conflict *within* them, of their personality, their common humanity, we know nothing. Even in what is presented as their bravery they are the same person, avid of sensation, submissive to the flesh and the world (which is war), grimly gay in their unprotesting acceptance of circumstance, seeking and finding a haven in bed, with a bottle of *fine* or Chianti to stand guard over their exaltation. This return to the primitive, accomplished by Hemingway as skilfully and naturally as Voltaire transported Candide about an impossible world, has as movement, as episode, the merit which Barrès used to call credibility, but the protagonists remain insignificant, a pair of silhouettes. Now and then their dialogue possesses a warm charm, is swept by an all too brief wind of sympathetically heedless youth — and charm and breeze vanish before the reader is able to fix these people in his imagination and love them as young lovers should be loved.

The war story, which fills nearly two-thirds of the book, is by very much more successful. Only one engagement is described, for Frederic was an ambulance officer, not an infantryman, and his experience of war was had just behind the lines. Yet that too was war, and the sound and smell of it in the streets in which this American volunteer and his men were billeted, over the hills and on the highways that led to the line of battle, are admirably rendered. Fine as they are, and of thrilling actuality as is the magnificent account of the retreat of the Italian horde from Caporetto, one retains a stronger sense of the characters who people the scene than of the war itself. It is these secondary characters of the novel who are the most vivid. The author knew about Catherine only that she was inexplicably in love with Frederic; she was Frederic's creature, not his, and what Frederic knew about her nobody will ever know. But the men at the front are Hemingway's creatures: he imagined them, knew them, gave them personality and life. It is not simply that Rinaldi is intended to be liked, the priest to be stupid and yet too helpless to draw one's rudeness, Passini and Manera to be socialists, Aymo and Piani and Bondello to be sterling comrades-in-arms. The intention in these

and other minor figures is fulfilled; they are what they are purported to be; and moreover it is only when they are on the scene that the novel is lifted above the level of selective autobiography, that Hemingway's creative gift expands and enjoys free play, that his profound feeling for men of simple desires and his sardonic and occasionally subtle humour emerge, and that his work is of a quality commensurate with the unreserved enthusiasm of which he is for the time being the object.

As for the writing, it seems to me the best Hemingway has done. The book is welded together with great care and scrupulous attention to detail. There are surprises in the novel, but only because we do not read attentively enough: the tone of each situation is sounded in advance; the colour of each character is indicated somewhere before he moves completely into view. In the descriptive passages, Hemingway shows for the first time that he can write by ear as well as by eye, so to say. Even the haphazard punctuation is not an obstacle to enjoyment of the fluidity and the rhythmical beauty of many of his periods. He has remembered, besides, all the lessons of his arduous, self-taught apprenticeship. Echoes are here of those steely paragraphs which comprized the first Paris publication of *In Our Time*, and of much that he has learned since. Now and then there is a line of gibberish, of unfortunate Joyce or bad Stein; his eye for objects and excessive concern with detail lead him into dull cataloguing; his meticulousness about *should* and *would* (which does not prevent his using *whom* in the nominative) lures him into affectation; he sprays the words "nice" and "fine" and "lovely" a bit too monotonously through his pages.

There are two Hemingways: the positive, creative talent skilfully at work in a being who sees and understands the anguish and bravery of men struggling with forces whose purpose they cannot divine; and the negative, fearful writer with the psychological impediments of a child afraid of the dark and conjuring it away with a whistle as hopeless as it is off key. From the first of these we may look for work of great merit.

Lewis Galantière

SUBTLETY AND CONVICTION

THE LAMP AND THE LUTE. *Studies in Six Modern Authors. By Bonamy Dobrée. Oxford. The Clarendon Press.* 1929. $2.00.

VISIONS AND CHIMERAS. *By Prosser Hall Frye. Boston. Marshall Jones Company.* 1929. $2.50.

These two books, both collections of literary essays, may serve as an illustration of the difference between two generations. There is no gain in pitting the two authors against each other: their purposes are different, and even when they are writing about the same man they barely meet. Yet one has to notice that they are representative of two ways of thinking about life and letters, and one is forced to make a judgment about the value of these two ways of thinking. The most obvious conclusion is that the younger generation has lost something of worth, an assurance of security, which gave a clarity to the judging and thinking of the older generation. That clarity seems to come from a knowledge of what are the right questions to put to the author who is being criticized. Whether that clarity and assurance were gained at the expense of a subtlety which the younger generation can employ remains debatable. Such a proposition would not seem to be confirmed in the present instances.

Of these two books, the one written by Professor Frye, who may be taken as a representative of the older school, is the less pretentious. It is a collection of papers in the selection of which the author has been guided, "rather by the merit of the subject than by that of the essay itself." The essays were largely occasional, one gathers, and it is not to be held against the author that this book seems slighter in importance than his previous work, *Romance and Tragedy*. One is disappointed at finding no essay as illuminating and provocative as some in his earlier work, notably *The Idea of Greek Tragedy*. Surveying these *Lesefrüchte*, however, is a pleasant task. There are essays upon Sheridan, Sterne, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Calderon, Montaigne, Pascal, Sir Thomas Browne, Renan, Thomas Huxley, Pater, De

Quincey, and Ibsen. Professor Frye's writing is always fresh, even when, as is usually the case, he is presenting accepted opinions. One rather wishes that in writing on Sheridan and Sterne he had borne more carefully in mind the excellent opinion he had announced in an earlier book: "But all the same the impertinence [i.e., biographical criticism] . . . is still impertinence. In any case what gives the writer his sole interest for criticism is his book." In writing of Sterne, in particular, his wit loses its pleasantly waspish quality and becomes almost quarrelsome in the manner of Carlyle on Lamb — a passage which he quotes and condemns. But such mistakes of tone and direction are, of course, rare, and in his essay on Carlyle he confutes himself and us by producing sound estimates of Carlyle the writer from a study of Carlyle the man.

In two essays the author transcends the limits of mere subject and writes of matters that are fundamental to human wisdom. The two essays are those on Montaigne and Pascal. He has shown the former as the skeptical philosopher *par excellence* who pushes his Pyrrhonism so far that the position of all later Christian apologists is seriously undermined. The essay on Pascal, the most significant in the book, treats of him as apologist and pessimist. As an apologist he strove for more than he could obtain: "To integrate religion with the physical order is beyond his powers; he can only postulate it after the fashion of his time." As a pessimist he is still extremely valuable; the astringency of his message is more necessary to our time perhaps than ever before, and "ancient speculation is still valid in as far as it consists of an ethical interpretation of life, a free play of the intelligence about our spiritual experience." It is here apposite to juxtapose Professor Frye's essay to the one on Pascal written by Aldous Huxley recently in the first issues of *The Realist.* Mr. Huxley, like all liberals, is offended by Pascal's vision of human life, and spends his time bickering with the shade of Pascal over Pascal's physical infirmities and ignorance of those delights of physical energy which Mr. Huxley holds dear. Professor Frye, standing on firmer ethical ground, puts the right questions to Pascal, disregards or even rejects his answer to the problem of the Christian religion because that answer is a work of supererogation (a typically humanist attitude) and accepts with approval Pascal's answer to the problem of the moral status of humanity. In other words, Professor Frye, by reason of possessing a definite and tradi-

tional set of beliefs about ethics, is better equipped to criticize Pascal and to elicit the essence of his teaching than is a writer whose beliefs are fluid, who possesses prejudices rather than beliefs, and who chases those prejudices around the periphery of the matter. The same proposition will be found valid when one comes to compare Professor Frye's essay upon Ibsen with that of Mr. Dobrée.

The Lamp and the Lute is in many ways a more interesting book than *Visions and Chimeras*. The subjects of Mr. Dobrée's essays, Ibsen, Hardy, Kipling, E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, are almost all of our time; the author keeps his eye pretty well fixed upon the problems of the contemporary imagination; there is a more legitimate opportunity for novelty in his point of view; and Mr. Dobrée seems to possess, or his choice of subjects invites, a greater subtlety than Professor Frye makes use of, a subtlety which frequently adds persuasion to the interpretation. Yet one is left, after reading, with the sense of dissatisfaction, a certainty that nothing like the last word has been said, and a frequent irritation at the inconsecutive character of Mr. Dobrée's thinking. This last quality may be due to the fact that these essays were originally lectures and have been abridged.

It is necessary to note that Mr. Dobrée has deliberately eschewed the ethical approach. He announces himself as incompetent and not desirous of attempting it. One is pleased at these fair words, the whole world is not yet of the humanist doxy, and the resources of "pure" literary criticism have not yet been exhausted. Unfortunately Mr. Dobrée's book demonstrates once again the difficulty of judging literature *in vacuo*; his subjects force him into the thorny field of ethics, and it is there that he is most ineffective as a critic.

To take the least interesting essays first: Mr. Dobrée proves once again that it is very difficult to say anything new or valuable about T. S. Eliot. The essay about E. M. Forster, who is used as a foil to Kipling, is slight; his interest in the "personal relation" and the "inner life" of his characters is emphasized; the essay will be of value to those readers who know Mr. Forster only as the author of *Passage to India*. Mr. Dobrée makes a valiant effort to rehabilitate Kipling as worthy of serious consideration. He stresses Kipling's creed of action, which should make that author popular with M. Massis's "jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui," and his "love of loyalty." One asks,

"Loyalty to what?" and seemingly must be content with just loyalty. The British Empire is instanced, and here, like all Kipling apologists, Mr. Dobrée is unhappy. He puts on a brave front: "The Empire then is to be cherished . . . because, like old Rome, it is the most superb instrument to cause men to outface the universe, assert himself (*sic*) against vacancy." This is pretty hollow, and, I think, Mr. Dobrée realizes it. The revaluation of Kipling fails, in spite of the impressive philosophical (and moral) background of "an indifferent universe" and stoicism that is erected for him.

It is when Mr. Dobrée approaches D. H. Lawrence that his non-ethical criticism breaks down completely. He is helpless, as would be anyone judging with the same lack of foundation, before Lawrence's gusto, vitality, "poetry." Mr. Dobrée has to accept, and accepts rejoicingly, the effusions about "essential maleness," "splendid split between the sexes," "old, salty way of love," "recoil from things gone dead." There is not a word of protest; one is supposed to consider all this "phallic mysticism" as possessing "sheer poetic quality." One would think that the trenchant opinions of Mr. Wyndham Lewis had never been made public. It was Mr. Dobrée's business to meet Mr. Lewis's objections to Lawrence's work and to meet them on the ethical grounds on which they were made.

If it is the failure to apply ethical criteria to Lawrence's work which invalidates the criticism of that author it is the application of confused and irrelevant moral judgments to Hardy which makes Mr. Dobrée's essay incoherent. Mr. Dobrée has been worried throughout his book by the Greeks. He insists that Hardy is to be tried by his relationship with the great tragic writers. At some time, one feels, the defenders of Hardy will regret the evil day when the names of Aeschylus and Sophocles were first invoked as sharers of his high place. Such a comparison if fairly made can only be fatal to such a high ranking of Hardy as Mr. Dobrée makes. One dislikes all this talk about "ranking," but if Sophocles is accounted a great tragic writer then, surely, some other term must be used for Hardy.

Mr. Dobrée has been led into this misuse of hyperbole, by a set of wrong opinions about ethics and the nature of tragedy. Like Hardy, for instance, he overrates the importance of the partial collapse of revealed religion. Surely the position of the modern non-Christian is not on that account different from that of Sophocles. Mr. Dobrée

cites as "the attitude common to all tragic writers" Gloster's remark in *Lear*

> As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
> They kill us for their sport.

This is surely not the attitude of the author of *Oedipus Coloneus*. Mr. Dobrée goes on "the great writer of tragedy manages to convey that though this be the truth it is well that men should behave thus and thus; . . . one way of life is better than another. . . . Not that fault is to be imputed to the wrongdoer; he also is a pebble of fate." There is a discrepancy here of the sort that Professor Frye had in mind when he wrote "Once admit sophistication into our conceptions of personal responsibility . . . and our moral downfall is assured." The great tragic writer, Mr. Dobrée says, can "see beauty in all things, even in the inexorable working out of the odds against man." Perhaps, when man is represented by an Antigone or an Oedipus; Hardy did not see it when he gave us his heroes and heroines, who are the Ios and Haemons of today, not tragic, but pathetic. Mr. Dobrée says of Hardy's Tess: "It was because of her sensitiveness, her integrity, her purity, that she was brought to ruin, not because she once, half-unwittingly, committed a fault." This is probably quite a true analysis of Hardy's tragic intuition, and after it only moral blindness can ask us to consider that intuition comparable to that of Sophocles or Shakespeare.

There are many merits in Mr. Dobrée's book to which this review does not do justice, notably the subtlety and wisdom of his remarks about Ibsen's "realism" and his symbolism. This essay on Ibsen, perhaps the best in the book, has more to say and is more interesting than Professor Frye's. The latter, however, goes straight to the mark and shows Ibsen as the student of "progressive degeneration." Mr. Dobrée recognizes that "the emotions that impel his people are [sometimes] those of emptiness and moral weakness," but he does not seem to realize how important this is, and consequently his essay lacks gravity and definiteness. Here, one realizes, is an instance of the advantage the older generation has over the younger; an advantage which will not be displaced until the younger critics have a set of beliefs — not necessarily the same set — but one as well-grounded and definite as that of the older school.

LAWRENCE LEIGHTON

AN APOLOGY FOR SCULPTURE

SCULPTURE. *A. M. Rindge, M.A., Ph.D. Payson & Clarke, Ltd.* 1929. $6.00.

With the term academic become one of opprobrium, critical standards have tended to disintegrate, and though there has been in recent years a reintegration of literary values, a similar movement has not yet appeared in art. The inclusiveness of the title of Dr. Rindge's book aroused the expectation of a sound aesthetic approach to an art in which the defects of contemporary culture are especially apparent; but the author's acquiescent attitude and complete catholicity of taste, impelling her to seek a common basis for the enjoyment of the most heterogeneous examples of sculpture of the past and present, militates against fundamental standards of any kind. This is unfortunately typical of the Twentieth century, for hitherto appreciation has always been healthily circumscribed. The Rococo critic enjoyed the Renaissance but disliked Gothic, the Victorian critic worshipped Gothic and despised the Rococo. Both would have been horrified by African art. But Dr. Rindge in trying to find a basis for the appreciation of utterly diverse types of sculpture, passes over the contradictory standards that must have been employed in their creation, to find a common denominator in a dubious psychological evaluation. It is interesting to remark that Dr. Rindge's profuse notes on aesthetics are derived entirely from modern works. It might have concerned her more to know what the various periods she has discussed themselves thought about what they were doing. If so, she would have been profoundly impressed by the originality of modern criticism.

Probably the declining use of sculpture impelled Dr. Rindge to write her a book. This trend in contemporary taste is partly due to the requirements of an architectural style which originated out of practical rather than artistic exigencies. "In the past," as Dr. Rindge points out, "in order to save a building from giving the two dimensional impression too strongly it has been the practice of the ages to emphasize three dimensions in its detail and ornaments, the columns of the colonnade, the splayed jamb, and the three dimensional relief

of sculptured ornament." But at present all this is accomplished as a result of the necessities of the zoning law, which force the architect to break up his building into groups of three dimensional units in the various set backs. But there is also, of course, the question of scale. When one is far enough away from a skyscraper to appreciate it as a whole, the incidental ornament is only perceived as a blurring and softening of the outlines. However, as most of our views of skyscrapers are of only one or two stories, such considerations would be ignored if people had continued to be interested in the didactic function of art; but it is only necessary to quote Ruskin's statement in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* that, "the only admiration worth having attaches itself wholly to the meaning of the sculpture and the color of the building . . . Proportion of masses is mere doggerel," to appreciate the complete reversal of fashion.

It is, also, partly due to an historical coincidence. When in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries painting began to be first disassociated from architecture and to exist as a separate undertaking, those two countries which especially furthered this development, Venice and Holland, were peculiarly weak in sculpture, so that the glyptic art never developed the equivalent of the easel picture until the Eighteenth century and the advent of French terra cottas. Today as a reaction from the tendency of Biedermeyer, Louis Philippe and Victorian rooms to be cluttered up with objets de vertue such extraneous decoration tends to be extremely sparse.

To solve this problem, to find a raison d'etre for modern sculpture, Dr. Rindge, even more than critics of painting, finds herself forced to advocate "art for art's sake" and a technique of appreciation based on such an approach. Her frankness goes beyond that of most modern critics, but this may account for the paucity of the historical aesthetics in her book. It is so apparent that no creative period in the past has held a similar theory of aesthetics that Dr. Worringer felt that he need only say, "the air of the museum floats around all our artistic creations" to damn them utterly. Dr. Rindge was obviously worried by the article[1] in which this statement occurred as she quotes it at length, but she circumvents such a conclusion by a very original theory, though of questionable validity. "How do we know that the museum is not a legitimate factor in our social scheme. Many feel

[1] *Criterion*, August, 1927.

that it is more than a Morgue or a Valhalla. It may have a part so significant in our group life — since we neither live by princely patronage and grandeurs or on a large scale ourselves — that it has been able to raise up to itself a special product, an art as peculiarly its own as Versaille or Amiens . . . When the force of Museum taste and selection arrives at a point of exercising enlightened pressure upon the artist producer, the public will be even better off, perhaps, than under those other ages commonly called golden."[2]

Granting, however, a theory more ingenious than convincing, there still remains the question of the function of sculpture in relation to the spectator. In regard to this, Dr. Rindge, quoting from DeWitt Parker, Roger Fry, Rhys Carpenter and others to support her theory, assumes a psychological evaluation. Primarily the enjoyment of sculpture is the heightened vitality resulting from an increased realization of volume, in other words Mr. Bernard Berenson's theory of "tactile value." Dr. Rindge adds to the usual theory of visual and tactile appreciation, a theory of enjoyment through breathing, which I believe was first applied by Mr. Geoffrey Scott to architecture.[3] The idea is that, "In breathing we accentuate our Conception of ourselves as volume; in expanding our lungs we feel that we are increasing our occupation of space extending in three dimensions." It is this effect that the artist seeks to stimulate. But the nebulousness of the whole approach is revealed when Dr. Rindge goes on to suggest that, "Somehow this gives our spacial conception of volume the idea of a container, and the idea of a container is inwardness. Inwardness has meaning for us from the idea that our brain is within directing our outward activities. May it not be that because of our idea of our

[2] Mr. Eric Gill in a recent book *The Future of Sculpture* also comes to the conclusion that the future of sculpture is the museum. This is particularly interesting coming from one who has for so long attempted religious work.

[3] Speaking of symmetrical spaces, he says, "Spaces of such a character, therefore, obtain an additional entry to our sense of beauty through this elementary sensation of expansion. Unconscious though the process of breathing habitually is, its vital value is so emphatic that any restriction of the normal function is accompanied by pain, and — beyond a certain point by a peculiar horror; and the slightest assistance to it, as, for example, is natural in high air — by delight. The need to expand, felt in all our bodily movements, and most crucially in breathing is not only profound in every individual, but obviously of infinite antiquity in the race." — *The Architecture of Humanism.*

outwardness and inwardness we know volume in another way than by the sense of touch, which would merely be a perception of continuity of surface?" By contrast with this involved and obscure pseudo-science the lyrical sensuality of the Pateresque school of criticism typified by the Sitwells and Adrian Stokes has much to recommend it, if only from the point of view of literary style.

However, I am skeptical of the psychological approach to art appreciation not only because of its ambiguity but because of its newness. I believe that criticism and creation which are contemporaneous are so interrelated that the aims of the art are explicit in the criticism of the period. Had the artist been interested in attempting to communicate a heightened vitality through a sense of volume contemporary criticism in ages self-conscious enough to be critical would have mentioned the fact. Failing to discover a similar point of view in criticism, I am led to believe that we are reading into various forms of art aims often entirely foreign to the artist. In the second place, I question the validity of the theory of tactile values from the point of view of the spectator. There is no reason why tactile values should not have been as appreciable a century ago as they are today, and yet to so sensitive an observer as the Président de Brosses, Mr. Berenson's favorite example of plasticity, the paintings of Giotto, only appeared "fortes mauvaises," and Goethe writing a little later from Assisi ignores them entirely.

Indeed the Eighteenth century though it knew little of psychology still had a very clear idea of what art should be, of how the Grand Manner might be obtained, and it did not feel called upon to invent a technique of appreciation for what did not conform to its definite standards. Consequently in both criticism and creation it showed a homogeneity especially enviable today. It does not seem quite fair, therefore, when Dr. Rindge blames the public for modern artistic ineptitude, saying, "We are suffering from an exaggerated form of self expression in art today only because the public has turned his back on the artist, museumed him, saying 'If we must have art, and it seems proper according to history, why, suit yourself.'" If this attitude contrasts unfavorably with that of artistic dictators like Boucher and LeBrun, not the public, but critics like Dr. Rindge are responsible. She herself has said, "Perhaps at the present day we are at liberty to discard the old ideals of usefulness or non-usefulness as criteria for

beauty, perhaps also the social-good idea, or the ethical point of view, perhaps even the concept of universality." But with the traditional standards abandoned no definite criteria were supplied in their place.

The inadequacy of the more theoretical part of Dr. Rindge's book is particularly disappointing since she proves herself so sound in the purely technical question of sculpture, such as Material, Treatment, Nature of Surfaces, etc. If the conclusions in respect to these are not especially original, their repetition may be justified since there has not been so complete a codification in English of the satisfactory solutions of sculptural problems. Dr. Rindge has chosen Romanesque sculpture to exemplify many of the points she has made because hitherto it has been adequately discussed only in archeological treatises, which are necessarily limited in circulation. However, since in mentioning various sculptors only to illustrate specific points her book presupposes a certain general knowledge of sculpture, it is hardly for those who would not have read the admirable works of Professor Kingsley Porter and Professor Chandler Post. Therefore, the most valuable point of Dr. Rindge's book is when she relies least on her sources, and discusses subjects with which they do not especially concern themselves.

However, the deficiency of Dr. Rindge's method will remain as long as she feels that, "The world is too full of a number of things to make it wise to place restrictions on the artist's choice" — even though she may add, "but having chosen he must submit to judgment on his grasp and his performance, on his reading of the subject." In respect to the second part of her premise Dr. Rindge is successful, but the ambiguity resulting from the first part vitiates this to a large extent. Her complete Catholicity of taste has defects. In order to be all embracing it becomes vague. In place of definite standards, it is based on a pseudo-scientific theory. Absolute evaluation is impossible because a fundamental norm is lacking, and, as a working theory of aesthetics, it is responsible for the eclecticism of modern art. When Dr. Rindge makes up her mind whether art should be useful or non-useful, whether it should contribute to the social good, whether it should contain the concept of universality, she may find her appreciation more circumscribed, but at least it will be more genuine.

JOHN WALKER III

TILTED MOONS

TILTED MOONS. *By S. Foster Damon. New York. Harper Bros.* 1929. $2.00.

Damon does only a small number of the things that can be done with language, but some of these no one else does. They are such quiet things that his verse sounds like a score of music read, not heard. His imagery shows a world which has been drawn, not modeled. These strict limitations make his Prosody a fit medium for his purpose.

His purpose in his criticism is the reverse of his purpose in poetry. He thinks that literature is a medium for ideas. In this he is not alone. There are very intellectual people indeed who think that all ideas are best expressed in poetry and there are intelligent people who know that some ideas exist only as presented in poetry. Damon uses big ideas as strictly and lightly as he uses sight and sound. When he is concerned with crevaces of the will and plots of the mind, when the solemnity and sweep of his subject matter sober his facility and restrain his taste, his technical proficiency rises high and he states ideas with the purity of oracular utterance.

His Prosody is clear, not "expressive"; the ideas are clear ideas, not notions. Yet the work is puzzling; puzzling not only because it deals with puzzles, but puzzling in its own ultimate meaning. Damon instinctively and with conviction is involved in religious matters, but he will not involve himself in religious decisions. He feels ideas — and strength of feeling is enough for him. He shows no interest in deciding the value which he gives to an idea or the comparative values he gives to more ideas than two.

Damon's lack of interest in an ordered rank of ideas explains his editing of his poems. Six of those in *Tilted Moons* should have appeared only among the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *Boston Symphony Orchestra Beethoven Memorial Festival Programme*, etc. Others could have taken the place of some in *Astrolabe*. If one cut out pages 15 (59-64), 72 (77-80), the core of *Tilted Moons* would appear as an oblique novel which presents in a possible sequence (partly by its construction, partly by its inception) the emo-

tions, moods and sensations attendant upon love. Each poem is itself a character and plot. The core of the book implies a form which is meant to have a multiform meaning to every reader.

The weak poems have the weaknesses which one would expect in a poet who does not care for the ordering of ideas in any rank. When literature lapses from taste or into "taste" one cause may be that little ideas rule big ideas (See *Image and After-Image*). Damon's lapses from taste occur most frequently in the use of adjectives and adverbs. Just as he often lets little ideas move from their positions — so the action he often gives adjectives and adverbs is not held down to the main action.

Adjectives and adverbs are the most difficult words. It is not enough simply not to use them. One must use them as if they were verbs. Yet they must be kept back from the front plain of performance. If they alone act, we have soft writing. If they reënact the main action, the work is stiff. Adjectives and adverbs are at once of a minor and a major importance. In poetry, where diction becomes almost the peer of form, adjectives and adverbs (which slip so neatly into metre and rhyme as to seem almost to have been originally devised only for this use) can do and undo the work of stanzas. A softness or stiffness in his adjectives and adverbs appears even in some of Damon's more astylar poems. Yet in poetry it is true that a chain is stronger than its weakest link. A verse is stronger than its weakest word. And while, in lyric poetry, one stanza ought to be as good as another, even in lyric poetry every word, every verse should not be as good as every other, or if as good in degree, then certainly not in kind. Indeed, the worst fault of adjectives and adverbs is to be too good.

Damon's lapses into "taste" are as fastidiously sought after as his fastidiously false rhymes. By his lapses into "taste" I refer to his experiments in Victorian and Decadent mannerisms. These are given and are to be taken ironically. He is most experimental when least mannered and in his mannered experiments the limitations of his temperament appear not only puzzling but disconcerting. He is careless of easy effects of style, yet does not handle them as surely as he handles difficult ideas. His poetry is always the better the least taste gets into it, but he has a restless spirit and must experiment even in the Georgian. Most successful Georgian writers are successful only because the nature of their talent makes them put into this manner all

the resourceful dexterity which, if their talent were ever so little different, they would put into experiment. But Damon manages to give out ideas in the Modern and the Georgian, the Decadent and the Victorian, and is occasionally successful in any of them. Every poem in *Tilted Moons* is an idea. This raises even the frivolous poems from the level of many poems which resemble them.

In the Apocalypses and Epitaphs and in "Jesus to Judas," "Burning Bush" and "The Judging of God" from *Astrolabe*; and in "Insomnia," "Protest," "July," "Second Spring" and "The Burial of Venus" from *Tilted Moons* Damon is a poet. His wildness of imagination, his depth of sentiment, his accuracy of statement lead me to examine his verse so closely that I find it does not contain the last and final requirement which can be made of poetry. That is, I find it more oracular than prophetic. But as I do not know any prophets who are abroad nowadays, I have a use for oracles.

JOHN WHEELWRIGHT

BALM IN GILEAD?

THE NEW AMERICAN CARAVAN. *Edited by Alfred Kreymbourg, Lewis Mumford, and Paul Rosenfeld. New York. The Macaulay Company.* 1929. $3.50.

STYLE AND FORM IN AMERICAN PROSE. *By Gorham B. Munson. Garden City. Doubleday, Doran and Company.* 1929. $2.50.

The New American Caravan contains half as many words as either of its predecessors, and includes the work of twenty-nine writers, whereas seventy-two were represented in the first issue, and sixty in the second. With the exception of two or three poems, the volume is free from the mediocre by-products of more or less distinguished writers; there is nothing comparable to Edmund Wilson's excursion this side of Paradise or to Lewis Mumford's experiment in reducing spiritual autobiography to baby-talk. There is a notable increase, moreover, in the proportion of young writers: more than half the contributors are under thirty; in the first *Caravan* the proportion was approximately a sixth, and in the second not quite a third. Less than half the contributors have published books, several have published only sparingly in the magazines, and for four this is the first appearance in print. Certainly the *New American Caravan* speaks for the youthful literati, and, even if there remains a question whether most of the deserving contributions could not have found publishers elsewhere, it comes nearer than its predecessors to serving a purpose which is not served by the magazines.

The task of selection has been better performed than formerly, but it is nevertheless necessary for the critic to eliminate, with a word or two of comment, several of the contributions. Why, unless there is some preconceived notion that a play must be included, should 56 out of the 460 pages be devoted to Paul Green's "Tread the Green Grass"? Why, to refer to a more reprehensible matter, should one-fifth of the entire volume be occupied with "The Obelisk," by William Rollins, Jr.? It is, for one thing, part of a novel — not, as the publisher's blurb states, "a full length novel" — and the novel of

which it is part will doubtless be published. The practice of printing fragments of novels is in any case questionable, and when the fragment is as conventional in its autobiographic realism as Mr. Rollins' work, the editors' motives are difficult to discern. Finally, we need spend little of our time in contemplation of E. E. Cummings' untitled contribution. One rejoices in the element of humor which it introduces into an otherwise serious volume, but one wishes that it were somewhat funnier and a great deal shorter. Mr. Cummings' manipulation of the *non-sequitur* is more literary and perhaps more ingenious than the exercises in the same *genre* by Frank Sullivan and Perelman, but they at least know when to stop.

This process of elimination leaves us with nine short stories, one critical essay, and about seventy-five pages of poetry. The *Caravan's* poetry is always a puzzle to me, for I believe there is a large body of interesting and distinguished, if not quite first-rate, poetry being written in this country today, and yet approximately two-fifths of the poetry in each *Caravan* has been mediocre and another two-fifths down-right bad. In the present issue, the saving fifth includes primarily the work of Phelps Putnam and Stanley Kunitz, with, somewhat more dubiously, the work of Matthew Josephson and Lincoln Fitzell. Putnam is, as Malcolm Cowley pointed out (*The New Republic*, Nov. 6, 1929), brilliantly and expansively Byronic in his romanticism. Kunitz is not — to disagree with what Cowley said about him in the same review — fundamentally a follower of Eliot: he is not elegiac, and he does not conceal himself behind a barrier of quotations. He is, however, a member of a school with which Eliot is somewhat allied, a school which, in revolt against the diffuseness of the Victorian lyric, insists on the packed line, the function of intellect as well as emotion, the subordination of imagery to tenseness of experience. Kunitz, if his imagination continues to develop, and if he learns to dispose more graciously of syntactical problems, is certain to be an important poet.

If much of the poetry in the *Caravan* is disappointing, the short stories at least stimulate reflection on the future of prose fiction. With the exception of Jean Toomer's "York Beach," of which I shall speak later, these stories exemplify the new barbarism, which is also the new romanticism. The new barbarism has, in its general outlines, been correctly described by Malcolm Cowley (New York

Herald-Tribune Books, June 30, 1929). The writers of the stories in the *Caravan* deal with primitive conditions, primitive emotions. They reject not only the moral but also the cultural standards of what is supposed to be civilized society. One of the stories actually portrays life among savages; three stories sketch unsophisticated and more or less savage types; one story gives a detailed and realistic description of primitive survivals in a Jewish wedding ceremony; two stories have as background the purposeless, gin-soaked existence of the so-called sophisticates. The themes include castration, feminine underwear, and, of course, fornication. The language is, in most cases, appropriately bald.

That the new barbarism is the new romanticism is perhaps sufficiently obvious, but it is worth pointing out that it is not only romantic in the humanistic sense but also when romanticism is defined as escape from reality. Why do these writers adopt such themes unless it is because they are unwilling to occupy themselves with industrial America, the America of Fords and Rotary Clubs, the America that hangs breathless over the stock ticker? It might almost be maintained that our old pioneering complex is breaking out in a new spot, that our deliberate preference for hoboes and harlots is a survival of the frontier antipathy to the virtues and even the vices of the cultivated mind.

But there is another element in these stories besides barbarism and that is objectivity. If there is one prophecy that is safe to make, it is that American literature is, for the time at least, through with the subjectivism of Sherwood Anderson and his disciples. Most of the heroes and heroines of these stories are, like the heroes and heroines of Ernest Hemingway's novels, without minds, so far as the reader is concerned; and when mental processes are introduced, they are described from the outside. Action is reappearing in fiction, and the hitherto ubiquitous stream-of-consciousness is left to flow unobserved in its caverns measureless to man.

Now if the new barbarism leaves me comparatively cold, the new objectivity is considerably more heart-warming. It is at least potentially good. It seems certain that the subjective novel, with its emphasis on the experiencing mind, has gone — in Joyce and Proust, in Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf — as far as it can profitably go. It seems probable, also, that this type of fiction, even at its best, neglects certain human qualities; primarily, it neglects the will.

This brings us to Mr. Yvor Winters' "The Extension and Reintegration of the Human Spirit Through the Poetry Mainly French and American Since Poe and Baudelaire," an essay which is as obstinate and uncompromising as its title indicates, but which may easily be more important than all the rest of the volume. What Mr. Winters is chiefly talking about is the function of the will in the face of the human dilemma. He talks about it, it seems to me, less academically and with far more feeling for the imaginative — as contrasted with the didactic — implications than the orthodox humanists; and he suggests the way in which the truth in their Olympian dogmas may be focussed on the problems of current literature.

It is the will that Mr. Winters talks about, and the will, if I understand him, not as a metaphysical entity but as an observable function of the body-mind. It is the will that the new objectivism may restore to literature. But I see few signs of that restoration in the stories in the *Caravan*. Their objectivity is, rather, the extension of that long process by which the subjectivists have pushed their search for reality further and further. Once we found reality in the currents of thought; then we probed deeper and discovered the flow of consciousness; then came the disintegration of consciousness as we probed the subconscious; and now we are back to simple deeds, having substituted Watsonian idols for Freudian. But the attitude is still passive: things are still happening *to* characters, only they happen to their bodies instead of to their minds.

This is hasty generalization about the stories in the *Caravan* but, though qualification is necessary, the chief contention is, I believe, sound. There is, however, one story in the volume which is occupied with the will, and very much occupied with it — Jean Toomer's "York Beach" — and from it we surmise that the restoration of the will to literature may be a difficult task. Mr. Toomer's hero is apparently, like Mr. Toomer himself, a disciple of Gurdieff; the will is emphasized, but only at the sacrifice of spontaneity and at the cost of an intolerable priggishness. Ernest Hemingway in *Farewell to Arms* depicts the function of the will on a lower level, but at least one believes that it is a human will that is functioning. Perhaps we do well to begin at the bottom.

Mr. Hemingway's progress will illustrate why I believe that objectivism is encouraging. It appears that he deliberately chose objec-

tivism as a literary technique, and that that technique forced him into a different, a not altogether passive, attitude toward experience. Perhaps the technique will force the young — and undoubtedly promising — writers in the *Caravan* in the same direction. At present, however, they are content to let things happen and to present heroes who let things happen. The difference between their confusion and Mr. Winters' clear-sightedness is indicative of the usual discrepancy in this age between prose and poetry, on the one hand, and criticism on the other.

The remarks on Jean Toomer and Yvor Winters provide the excuse for introducing into this already too miscellaneous review still another element. Mr. Munson's volume is a serious attempt by a serious critic to analyze the nature of American prose. I have expressed elsewhere (*The Nation*, October 2, 1929) some of my reasons for regarding this book as a failure. Mr. Munson wishes to find standards for life and literature. Like Mr. Toomer he borrows, without complete assimilation, the ideas of others; unlike Mr. Winters, he fails to base his principles upon a sound and arduous study of literature itself. The book is simply synthetic, a melange of Babbitt, Orage, and Gurdieff; and it might be added that Mr. Munson does not seem to have profited greatly from his own study of prose masters.

GRANVILLE HICKS

FROM AN IVORY TOWER

HENRY JAMES' CRITICISM. *By Morris Roberts. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.* 1929. $2.50.

In 1906 when Henry James began to prepare the collected edition of his novels and tales, he decided to revise all his work, as well as to write for each of the volumes a preface in which he would indicate the source and the method of the work, and trace even something of the cluster of reminiscence, the thread of experience used as point of departure. We wonder at this enormous labor of love, expended upon twenty-five volumes; for the edition was small and unprofitable, and James, despite thirty years of celebrity, had a pathetically small public. The long technical expositions alone, written in his leisurely, elaborately mannered style (which always frightened away the wrong people), reveal how seriously Henry James regarded his whole adventure as an artist.

These curious prefaces, as he wrote to Howells, were to be "a sort of plea for Criticism, for Discrimination, for Appreciation on other than infantile lines. They ought, collected together . . . to form a sort of comprehensive manual or *vade-mecum* for aspirants in our arduous profession." There was the story of one's hero, he would say, and then there was also "the story of one's story." A great portion of his fiction, as well, is devoted to the drama of the creative effort, as he watched it in himself; and his exquisite letters are deeply colored by the passion for formal perfection which ruled him, much like poor Flaubert in the celebrated hunt for the *mot juste*. The adventure of art was almost the only thing that happened to Henry James, and thanks to this, he became, in a particular sense, a very great critic. Intensely aware always of the processes of literature he addressed himself rather to the informed taste which he presumed in the literary initiate. The power of perception worked in him at an intense pitch; he could scarcely read a contemporary novel without mentally taking it apart, or imagining it rewritten. And so his criticisms seem more instructive, more professional by far than those of the famous Victorian critics who were largely concerned with the moral or the social lessons of great works. One can think of no critic of recent times whose

observations were so fashioned to the usage of the actual craftsman. The reading of his stories of "the literary life," his essays, and especially his letters might prove most stimulating for many who tend only to imitate the fashionable and popular models. James opens the mind to infinite possibility and variety inherent in the prose form, if there is but energy and enterprise enough.

In the light of a growing curiosity, nowadays, as to literary method, Mr. Roberts' monograph is a valuable and rather fascinating bit of scholarship. The mere collation of so many of James' views in an organized plan — a difficult task, at that! — will surprise those who are unfamiliar with his power of epithet, and his almost tormented sensitiveness for shades of distinction and reaction; the influence of the author of *The Golden Bowl* upon many modern writers such as Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, and even James Joyce, will be all the better understood.

The heritage of puritanism received by James in his New York and New England youth is remarked by Mr. Roberts. The elder James had unconventional notions of education; but one feels that he practiced them, after all, in the secure knowledge that neither William nor Henry would ever stray very far. Thus, when Henry James as a young man is exposed to French atmosphere an interesting struggle is provoked in his conscience. He becomes a dual character swayed between his reservations against the gross, the sensual in French literary life and all that free discussion, articulateness, intelligence about art which was so typical of Paris in the '70s and '80s. At first, in the earliest reviews, he is indignant at the Naturalists because "adultery is their only theme," and their treatment of it is "vicious and arid." But thereafter, there is a steady growth in him toward sympathy for the most self-conscious literary school of the age; there is, in fact, a progression over a great many years, an evolution of temperament up to his final period, which offers a fascinating opportunity for the study of an intellectual drama, and which Mr. Roberts, I fear, has failed to exploit.

Puritanism became largely a *personal* affair with James as time passed. (We must remember that it is only the public display of puritanism that arouses so much reaction nowadays.) James places characters of integrity in his novels against characters of other kinds,

largely because he clings to a system of values, the moral values which he believed to be Anglo-Saxon, or Victorian, if you wish. Yet his strong moral sense was colored by his aesthetic preoccupations; and he arrived at a theory of artistic freedom that was very eloquent and daring enough in its time. He became virtually the spokesman for the French school in England and America, urging their objectiveness, their finished style and design against the sentimental formlessness of English fiction with its "three-decker" novels. He could even defend Maupassant and Zola, while regretting their limited vision of the range of human character. The novelist, he felt, must be at complete liberty to feel and say, to be true to his perceptions, regardless of public opinion and all critical rules, distinctions, classifications. "Make something fine," he wrote, "in the form that shall suit you best, according to your temperament."

In his "later manner," in keeping with the change of tone in his novels, James underwent a further evolution which drew him away from the French realists. He worked alone, in his house at Rye, over his great triad of novels — far from Mayfair and its dinner and tea-parties to which he had come with faithful notebook for so many years. He was no longer an apologist for realism. The only worthwhile criteria for him now were how living, how interesting a book could be, how many "true meanings" the artist aided to be born. The tendency of *The Ambassadors*, *The Golden Bowl*, *The Wings of the Dove*, was certainly to idealize his subjects in a classical sense. Raw life, photographed, dispassionately recorded no longer concerned him. The great artist must do something with life. The Naturalists, he felt now, had nothing to show us in the way of the operation of character, the possibilities of conduct, the part played in the world by the *idea*. He preferred Hamlet and Lear as characters, because they were so "finely aware" of what was happening to them, whereas most ordinary people weren't aware of anything. In his last and finest novels, James clung to the plausible most skillfully, but idealized his characters by endowing them with sensitiveness and consciousness to an amazing degree, with a wealth of human grace and complexity which he certainly drew out of his own strange organism. Art, as he announced from his ivory tower, was what you added to life, which, unsmelted, is a "splendid waste" or a dull chaos; art "muffled the ache

of the actual"; the image, in short, was superior to the thing itself.

Henry James' dislike of Flaubert, which Mr. Roberts is troubled by, becomes quite understandable now. James longed to lift subjects above the level of mere anecdote, and place them within the sphere of drama. He would rather not drift with the turbid flood of life, but would endeavor to extract its finest importance from his subject, "causing its parts to flower together into some splendid, special sense." He forecast the reaction against such faithful realism as *Madame Bovary* and *Anna Karenine*, and urged in their place an action all simplified and unified, having a "luminous centre," an "acute central consciousness," and the dignity of classical drama. To his passion for design, for polyphonous prose rhythms, was wedded a love of seriousness and grace, delicacy and integrity of character. He is a spokesman of *l'art pour l'art* (figuring among the "horrid company" of the Yellow Book); while he clings to fixed, honorable, if modestly propounded, moral values.

"It is art that *makes* life," he wrote at the end; "makes interest, makes importance . . . and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process!"

It would be long to consider here how well James exemplified his philosophy of art in such a story as *The Altar of the Dead*, or in the beautiful mazes of *The Wings of the Dove*, with its magic of door after door opening for us. But certainly his theory is articulate and vigorous enough in the many works of criticism cited by Mr. Roberts. Certain of these, as the essay on Zola, in *Notes on Novelists*, are as composed and dramatic as any of his best tales, while having a splendid logic. He believed that the critic must be "sentient and restless," always reacting, reciprocating and penetrating, in order to be a "valuable instrument." And so it is truly exciting to see him respond to his opportunities. He had an unequalled knowledge of the craft of fiction; and though he confines his readings chiefly to the nineteenth century in France, Italy and England, his theory for this very reason becomes all the more explicit. One may return to him again and again, with humility, and still find an inexhaustible fund of suggestion. This enormous knowledge of his craft Mr. Roberts has indicated unmistakably in James, while lacking, one feels, the equipment and the experience fairly to measure it.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

QUICK FINGERS

THE NOISE THAT TIME MAKES. *By Merrill Moore. New York. Harcourt, Brace and Company.* 1929. $2.00.

A few years ago, a group of University men, instructors and students at Vanderbilt, who were interested in the writing of poetry, used to meet more or less regularly in Nashville. Because they had to call themselves something, they took the name of *Fugitives*. They published a small magazine, to which they contributed anonymously, and later brought out an anthology. The more prominent members of the group were John Crowe Ransom and Donald Davidson; Merrill Moore, at that time an undergraduate, was a prolific contributor at the group meetings. "Another member would bring to the meeting his small stint of poetry," writes Mr. Ransom, "but Moore would bring twenty, thirty, or fifty brand-new sonnets as his exhibit — more than his time-allowance would let him read. We often thought of a procedure which a consideration for his dignity as well as our own prevented us from carrying out: we wanted to offer publicly to match Moore against the world; we would have locked him and the challenger in a room for a given time, and then compared the poetry which they brought out with them; we knew that Moore would be far in the lead for quantity, and we were not uneasy as to the quality." Indeed, if the hundreds of sonnets which Dr. Moore is reputed to have hidden away in valises and scrap-books, are as good as these in *The Noise That Time Makes*, Mr. Ransom is justified in his rather naive boast. Here is a century of poems as vigorous and exciting as any I have read since the publication of Mr. Ransom's own excellent book, *Chills and Fever*. And — startling *tour de force* in a day of jaded freedom! — they are all sonnets.

At least, I suppose they are sonnets. Like the fine sonnets of E. E. Cummings (such a one, for instance, as that beginning *Along the brittle treacherous bright streets*), they violate every convention of the form; they are disdainfully irregular, in metric, in rhyme, and in structure. There is hardly one of them that would not reduce a class in English Versification to hysteria. The most formal of them is cal-

culated to drive the average College theoretician mad. But unconventional or not, each of them contains one element essential to the sonnet: single purposeful force; and in all of them are apparent two qualities essential to good poetry: sincerity and guts. Neither term is easily to be defined. If, like the demonstrator at a class-room autopsy, I can dissect a poem and say to the Hungry Sheep, *Here, you see, is the poem's soul; and here — please observe — are the bowels of its strength;* then I can be pretty sure that the subject of my autopsy is not a poem at all, but a rhetorical exercise, a series of poetical effects. One of the marks of your true poem is that it defies analysis. And so it is with Dr. Moore's sonnets. Here is one of the best:

Warning to One

Death is the strongest of all living things
And when it happens do not look in the eyes
For a dead fire or a lack-lustre there,
But listen for the words that fall from lips
Or do not fall. Silence is not death;
It merely means that the one who is conserving breath
Is not concerned with tattle and small quips.

Watch the quick fingers and the way they move
During unguarded moments — words of love
And love's caresses may be cold as ice
And cold the glitter of engagement rings;
Death is the sword that hangs on a single hair,
And that thin tenuous hair is no more than love
And yours is the silly head it hangs above.

Now, it is easy to criticize the technic here: to point out, first of all, the irregularities of division, of rhyme, of line, with the poignantly dissident effect of strangeness thus produced; then to comment on the casually precise diction — a characteristic of all Fugitive verse; to note, perhaps, the poet's debt to the Ransom of *Here lies a lady of beauty and high degree,* or the Donne of *A Nocturnall Upon S. Lucies Day;* to draw attention to the finality, and at the same time the improvisatory lightness, of the sonnet. So much for the textbooks; and so much will suffice for nine poems out of ten. The tenth poem, however, eludes exposition of this sort; the tenth poem's essence, unsubstantial and not to be apprehended, lives far below its many surfaces; it is eternally imminent, never known. And Dr. Moore is a good poet, not because he is facile, skilful, precise, and keenly observ-

ant: but because there is an exciting number of these tenth poems among his sonnets. In his sinewy, sweetly acid verses he has managed to combine the three elements of which all valid poetry is compounded: a gracious technic, a sound sense, and an undefinable, unlimited power of suggestion.

The Noise That Time Makes is an important book. Like *Chills and Fever* and Donald Davidson's *The Tall Men*, it is a sign that the present estate of American poetry is a good estate. Beyond the *Atlantics* with their antiseptic ghosts of dead poems, beyond the violently youthful Dr. Williams with his little mad reviews, there is a group of men from Nashville who are neither pompous nor puerile. They are not concerned with theorizing or with propaganda. Interested in the writing of poetry, they are doing what few of our contemporaries will take the trouble to do: they are writing poetry.

DUDLEY FITTS

THE RAISING OF LITERARY CRITICS

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. *A Study in Litterae Inhumaniores. By Norman Foerster. Chapel Hill. The University of North Carolina Press.* 1929. $1.00.

In *The Sacred Wood* Mr. T. S. Eliot speaks of criticism as being a development of sensibility. Curiously enough, such sensibility may lead to two diametrically opposite types of critics — the impressionist and the humanist. For your true impressionist is trying no less to do what your Aristotelian humanist does: to make the past re-live in terms of present feeling (since there are no surer terms) and with philosophic and aesthetic overtones.[1]

Mr. Foerster, however, does not conceive, either in *The American Scholar* (part of which appeared in the last number of THE HOUND & HORN) or in his *American Criticism*, that an analogy of this kind exists. Impressionism, to him as to Mr. Babbitt, means any undisciplined dealing with the immediate and the actual. He feels that it is eleutheromania or hyperaesthesia, that the hyperaesthete or eleutheromaniac cannot construct, or, as Mr. Eliot has it, cannot "ériger en lois." Mr. Foerster would not appreciate, for example, the painter Seurat or even the most deft of the Impressionists because they glorify the momentary. Yet just here is where the humanist critic, if he is not aware, will make a slip. The theories of Seurat were based not only upon the colour-divisionism theory of Chevreuil but also upon universal laws of human psychology relating to the affective principles of descending, ascending, curving and perpendicular lines. If this is something of which no Greek, no Phidias, no Aristotle would have approved, I should like to know it.

Because Mr. Foerster is a humanist and not an impressionist, his thesis in *The American Scholar* is to reduce the number of literary historians, who are impressionists, and to provide for the increase of

[1] A paraphrase of Mr. Eliot's words that "a literary critic should have no emotions except those immediately provoked by a work of art — and these . . . are, when valid, perhaps not to be called emotions at all." (*The Sacred Wood*, p. 11.)

real literary critics, who would be humanists. He believes that our graduate schools are full of literary historians. A literary historian is a critic who attempts to fit the facts of the past among which he grubs into the phenomena of time and change, a student with a barbaric enthusiasm for the flux of philosophy. This is the method of Hegel and has been generally taught to the American scholar working for his doctorate.

Students who start off with their true bent to be literary critics and who become literary historians are, to Mr. Foerster, the danger to scholarship and culture. In this study he pleads for liberalizing our rather Teutonic master's and doctor's degree with the French dissertation system. In detail, he would have the master's degree in letters represent not the specialism of the graduate school alone but the liberal and even romantic point of view of the undergraduate, such as "Gefühl ist alles" and "a good time was had by all." As for the doctor's degree, he would allow it to be conferred only upon well-rounded scholars, who by combining what is known in France as both erudite (scientific) and literary criticism have shown that they had attained "an intimate perception of the human value of literature." Mr. Foerster feels that a new generation is coming that will attempt "to dominate the temporal flow of things and thought" and which will be superior to the personal estimates of romantic impressionism and the historical ones of objectivism and philology. If that generation produced a couple of Sainte-Beuves, one would not object. This reviewer, nevertheless, has some fears of humanism:

The humanism of today has too many rules. A certain mental paralysis attends the reading of more than twenty pages of its tenets. There are chapters in Mr. Brownell's *Democratic Distinction in America* and in Mr. Babbitt's *New Laokoön*, notably those on Formal Education in the one and The Theory of Spontaneity in the other, which are vague from either too many and too learned words, like the words in a physician's vocabulary, or from too many citations. Furthermore, the citations are apt to be taken from stale rather than from up-to-date material. There are prolix pages, too, in Mr. Foerster's concluding chapter of *American Criticism*, where he undertakes to show what is the proper critical attitude before a work of art, although the present volume may be cleared of vagueness.

I do not wish to be hard on humanism, for I think it is on the right track in its Aristotelian love of the universal and the unchanging,

while no other humanist perhaps has been so sympathetic in his appreciation of the values of vital impressionism as Mr. Foerster. Mr. Babbitt certainly has not, since he seems to deplore in *The New Laokoön*, his most gracious as it is his most considerable book, modern tone-painting in music, such as Debussy's, and modern skyscrapers. The humanists do not evidently appreciate that their suppressing a comparison of, say, Debussy's music with Monet's pond-lily series is too rigid. Why break a butterfly on the wheel of a categorical imperative? What harm in being allowed to make a correct association of ideas? Why this ruling out of art of the immediate and the actual? We would then have none of Stevenson's short stories, no Mrs. Dalloway, no Proust, nor soliloquy of any of the best sort. It is the lack of the vital and the actual that has tended to make humanism, as it made neo-classicism and formalism, a feast of reason without the alembic of emotion or religion.

Mr. Foerster thinks above all that his plan for liberalizing the graduate school with the ideas of the undergraduate would attract to it better students. I do not know. I only recall the phrase of Mr. Brownell that the centripetal force of elective affinity is absent from the elective system. If this is so, no amount of Mr. Foerster's combination of erudite and literary criticism — Mr. Foerster has praiseworthily in mind the French lycée — will brighten the graduate school. The trouble is not that the graduate school is not like the undergraduate school, but vice versa. As the latter becomes more like the lycée, the better the students will be, for those whose intelligence or lack thereof cannot stand the test will be dropped and cease to be a burden to the resources of both their home and their nation.

No, humanism is heir to the faults of all criticism: like a lawyer's brief, it is a postfact. Some of the best criticism — the criticism of honest observation — is personal reaction or impressionism but informed by humanistic standards. Humanism thus adds to the vital foundation of criticism stress upon form, dogma, and a sense of balance. In so far as Mr. Foerster would dust off our dustiest doctorates, he is right; but in so far as he distrusts impressionism as a method of putting us in touch with beauty, he is wrong. At times the limbo of conjectural emotions in which a D. H. Lawrence mulls, though neither admirable nor right, is indeed refreshing after an overdose of humanistic common-sense.

JAMES W. LANE

EDMUND WILSON AS POET

POETS, FAREWELL! *By Edmund Wilson. Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1929. $2.00.

If Allen Tate is correct in defining a journalist as one who does not stay long enough with his subject matter to learn what it is about, then Mr. Wilson is too often a journalist when he essays verse. His failures occur mainly because of a delusive facility, which shows itself at its best in such echoes of the later style of Yeats as occur in *A Young Girl Indicted for Murder* and at its worst in his light verse. The poems included in the section called *Nonsense,* and a few others that should have appeared there, might have been amusing enough one by one in manuscript, but, collected in a professedly serious volume, they are mildly exasperating. The power to write light verse that is poetry is a special gift, possessed in all likelihood by only two Americans of Mr. Wilson's generation, Malcolm Cowley and Archibald MacLeish; when Mr. Wilson attempts the genre he merely writes newspaper verse that is not discernibly better than the usual trade article. His facility betrays him again in such a piece as *The Lido,* in which a young girl yields her *frêles faveurs* in a mildly Proustain setting, the entire affair being treated in terms of the atmospheric effects. *Copper and White* is barely more than a newspaper report of similar material; his short prose pieces are extremely weak, and for more or less similar reasons.

Somewhat more interesting are the group of poems under the title of *Stucco and Stone* and the piece called *Boboli Gardens,* poems that represent Mr. Wilson's contribution to the contemporary adventures in rhymed Parnassianism undertaken chiefly by the professed revoltés —and revoltées—against the unrhymed Parnassianism of H. D. The first poem under the first title has the enameled suavity that, being meaningless, one can permit without irritation to no one save Gautier; the third poem of the group is looser but more charming. The last three stanzas of *Boboli Gardens* are particularly lovely, though they shade out of something like Samain into something vaguely reminiscent of Mr. Yeats's *Presences.* It is possibly worth mentioning that none of the Parnassianism of the last ten years, fash-

ionable as some of it has been, will bear even a moment's comparison with the bleak choral grandeur of a seldom noted poem by Agnes Lee, a poem called *A Statue in a Garden,* written, I believe, nearly twenty years ago.

One's objection to Mr. Wilson's assumption of the Yeatsian armor is not to the garment as such, for it is a good one, nor to imitation, which is necessary and desirable to a certain extent. But it is not a sufficient discipline for the wearing of that particular costume to admire the grand manner in general and the Yeatsian grand manner in particular. A traditional grand manner, ready for anyone to assume, occurs only when there is a traditional discipline and morality by which everyone is prepared. No such discipline now exists; Mr. Yeats's manner has grown out of his to say the least strenuous and life-long if somewhat idiosyncratic discipline; it is an intensely personal thing. It might conceivably be taken over in a measure by another poet, but only by a poet who had in a sense earned the right, who had performed a comparable amount or kind of moral labor. Mr. Wilson sometimes seems to rattle a trifle loosely in the armor. The fact that Mr. Wilson is intellectually a good many degrees less innocent than Mr. Yeats does not affect this particular situation, or at least not in Mr. Wilson's favor, even though Mr. Yeats's moral (and poetic) results are frequently seriously weakened by their chimeric bases. One of the factors contributing to Mr. Yeats's ultimate stylistic effect is the very sincerity of his innocence, a kind of pathetic nobility, any part of which would be out of place in Mr. Wilson's work.

It would be unfair to dwell on the weak poems in Mr. Wilson's book did they not embody vices that seem in constant danger of invading his best work and cheapening it. He approaches his muse with just a little too confident a swagger and frequently suffers as he deserves; for a secure mastery of style proceeds normally out of an awkwardness that is several stages beyond Mr. Wilson's particular kind of smoothness, an awkwardness that is born of humility before basic difficulties and that is overcome only by pretty heavy labor.

The book, in spite of all one can say against it, has its fine moments. *Infection,* though a shade too dependent on Yeats, is admirable; and admirable likewise is the poem entitled *To a Painter Going Abroad,* despite its slight excess of minor European geography. This latter poem contains a statement so finely phrased as:

Tell her I know what desperate pastime fills
The summer's slow defeat —

and it is definite and firm throughout. Best of all is the piece called *Provincetown,* which I quote entire:

We never from the barren down,
Beneath the silver-lucid breast
Of drifting plume, gazed out to drown
Where daylight whitens to the west.

Here never in this place I knew
Such beauty by your side, such peace —
These skies that brightening imbue
With dawn's delight the day's release.

Only, upon the barren beach,
Beside the gray egg of a gull,
With that fixed look and fervent speech,
You stopped and called it beautiful.

Lone as the voice that sped the word! —
Gray-green as eyes that ate its round! —
The desert dropping of a bird,
Bare-bedded in the sandy ground.

Tonight, where clouds like foam are blown,
I ride alone the surf of light —
As — even by my side — alone,
That stony beauty burned your sight.

The poem is, for the present reviewer, one of the best lyrics of recent years; and it suffices, along with a few others, to lift the book from the ruck of a good deal of amateurishness to the intense elegance of the amateur in life and in art at his finest.

YVOR WINTERS

THE PLUMED SERPENT

IDOLS BEHIND ALTARS. *By Anita Brenner. New York. Payson & Clarke, Ltd.* 1929. $5.00.

In *Idols Behind Altars* a young American woman born and educated in Mexico attempts the difficult task of trying to explain her adopted country to American readers. "Why is Mexico the way it is?" and "Why do Mexicans act the way they do?" are not easy questions. The history of foreign books on Mexico is filled with the corpses of attempts to answer them. Miss Brenner, however, has approached the problem from a little different point of view, and as a result has succeeded far better than most of her predecessors. Her book is a book of artists — for it is only as such that Mexicans can be understood. Mexico is "a nation which establishes a school for sculpture before thinking of a Juvenile Court, and which paints the walls of its buildings much sooner than it organizes a Federal Bank." (p. 315.)

Miss Brenner's career is unique. Raised from the nursery on a diet of Mexican folklore, superstition and popular ballads, she spent her girlhood in the midst of the Revolution on a hacienda near Aguascalientes. To her, Villa was no remote bandit hero to be killed and resuscitated daily in the newspapers, but an all-important actuality. The soldiers bathing in the irrigation canal or slaughtering her father's cattle, and their wives begging over the picket fence for flowers to take to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe or running to get water for their wounded men were as much a part of her daily life as feeding the ducks or helping to milk her father's cows. From the ranch and the Revolution she graduated to the University of Mexico, the oldest institution of higher learning in the Americas, founded over eighty years before Harvard. Here in Mexico City she came in contact with a new type, the metropolitan bourgeois, and learned what happens to the Indian when he deserts the country for the city's slum. Here also she met the artists, teachers and scholars, the greatest figures of the "Mexican Renaissance." Her equipment for the preparation of this book was made complete by a commission she received from the university to undertake an investigation of Mexican art.

Miss Brenner's book is divided into three parts of approximately

equal length. Part One constitutes an introduction to the Mexican character and gives a general history of Mexico from early Pre-Columbian times down to the Revolution. On the whole this is the least interesting portion of the book. Other authors have handled the subject with more interest and with greater clarity. Part Two is devoted to a general discussion of the lives of the Mexican people, their religion, their popular art, and the Revolution. Here Miss Brenner is at her best, especially in such places as where she describes the position of the *petate*, or reed mat, in the life of the nation, or of the *vacilada*, that peculiar Mexican laughter, in the character of the people. The Revolution is handled masterfully. Here is the bad boy Villa, popular hero and the subjects of poets "who rather hoped but never quite believed Villa would save whatever it was they wanted saved." (p. 213.) Here is Zapata, the martyr subject of hymns who with fifty thousand pesos on his head learned to read after he became a general. And here is Filipe Carrillo, longshoreman, governor, railroad engineer, the unarmed hero of Yucatan, "shot in the back by a coward." (p. 223.) The author has translated many of the popular ballads of the time and Felipe's tragic death is told along with stories of other heroes of the Revolution.

The third and last section of the book is devoted to a discussion of the artists of modern Mexico. There is passing mention of various accomplishments in literature, music and architecture, but it is not in these fields that Mexico has done her finest work. It is in painting, and especially in mural painting in the fresco technique, that Mexico has become internationally famous.

The figure of Diego Rivera stands colossal among the painters of our time. Not only is he the leader of one of the most creative groups of artists working anywhere in the world today but he is perhaps the single most powerful influence for sanity in modern painting. The power of his conceptions and the straightforward simplicity of his technique make the *isms* of Paris and elsewhere seem but weak and futile experimentings. Rivera does not paint for the patrons of Place Vendôme art dealers or for the purchasing agents of American museums, nor yet for any "enlightened few" — whoever they may be. Rivera paints for the people of Mexico — the Indians. They, their lives, their occupations, their festivals, and their heroes are his subjects and his inspiration. His work is the fruit of the Revolution, and to

Mexico the Revolution is not merely an interesting recent historical event but the most important fact in all history. "The return to native values" (p. 231) is its keynote. Rivera's work has made him a political force in all Latin America. "Nowhere as in Mexico has art been so organically a part of life, at one with the national ends and the national longings." (p. 32.) "Nowhere as in Mexico has art so intimately been linked to the fate of its people." (p. 244.) To the Mexican artist the subject is as important as the style — perhaps more important. "Art for art's sake is an aesthetic fallacy; art for the people is a phrase of inconsistent and hypocritical sentimentalism. Art is necessarily a thing of the people, not an abstract concept, nor a vehicle for exploiting whims." (p. 245.)

The first work of the "Mexican Renaissance" was done under Rivera's leadership by a group of painters known as the "Revolutionary Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters and Sculptors." This was a truly coöperative organization — at least in theory. The group on all occasions acted as a unit and the artists frequently helped on one another's pictures. The painters, masons, laborers and apprentices worked together and on an equal footing. The highest wages received averaged four dollars a day. The Syndicate sought definitely to ally itself with the laborer not only in theory but in practice.

After describing the early activity of the Syndicate, the difficulties it encountered and its final disbandment, Miss Brenner proceeds to devote a chapter to each of its principal painters: *Siqueiros*, son of wealthy, conservative parents, at sixteen a drummer boy in the Revolution, sent by the Carranza government to study in Europe, covers the walls of the National Preparatory School with unsigned frescoes and then leaves Mexico City with the pictures half finished to sit on strike committees in Guadalajara, convinced "that he must build an 'organic' place for art, or abandon painting." (p. 264.) *Orozco*, the "Mexican Goya," with his left arm a stump at the wrist, "the only one of his great contemporaries who has not studied in Europe" (p. 270), draws powerful cartoons for Revolutionary publications and later returns from tinting enlarged photographs in California to shock the old ladies of Mexico City's bourgeoisie by his "monstrous Indians with bull's eyes." (p. 254.) *Charlot*, Paris born descendent of Mexican- and Russian-raised French and Spanish-Jewish ancestors, student of Mathias Grünewald while with the French army of occupation,

sets out to visit an uncle in Mexico City where he paints the first mural (also the first fresco) in the National Preparatory School and stays to copy ancient Mayan frescoes and bas-reliefs for the archaeologists of Carnegie Institute and to make sketches "of women in *rebozos*, carrying baskets, babies, flowers." (p. 308.)

Here also are the lesser known men: *Goitia*, mystic, "mad" painter of Xochimilco, author of unsigned canvases of sad Indians, mourners, and dead men dangling from trees. *Posada*, the "Mexican Daumier," cartoonist, "illustrator of ballads, . . . the prophet of two revolutions" (p. 185), and "the greatest artist in Post-Conquest Mexico" according to Rivera. *Pintao*, goat herder, geologist, woodcarver, the living proof that in Mexico time is of no importance, that "the same elements produce similar results . . . a hundred years apart." (p. 92.) And a dozen others.

In style Miss Brenner's writing is not always fortunate. At its best it is clear, forceful and capable of portraying events with considerable character. At its worst it is difficult and almost without meaning. The context does not help to clarify the following:

> The magic compact ring of voices spirals on sob and falsetto wail around the melody and tale Mexican mood. Mood of poetry in twilight, landscape, gray, grayer, purple and black, burnt at the edges; human with a small bell, and a swathed conic hatted bundle hedged against a black doorway, making a tiny musical lament. (p. 179.)

Throughout a considerable part of the book the reader must either plow along paragraph after paragraph undisturbed by the mere fact that he really doesn't quite know what it is all about, or else imagine himself back in high school and go over the text as if he were studying Virgil. The latter hardly seems worthwhile — and for that matter neither does the former. A well developed ability to skip will be useful in reading this volume. Miss Brenner's style, however, is often excellent. Some of the descriptions of the Revolution for example could hardly have been better done.

The book is on the whole well illustrated, containing a great variety of photographs of primitive and popular art of all kinds, as well as many line cuts reproducing cartoons, broadside illustrations and details from early manuscripts. As with many books of this type, however, when it comes to a discussion of individual artists there is frequently an insufficient number of reproductions to exemplify their

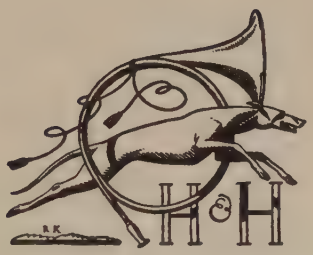
work. For example, though Rivera has done over one hundred and sixty-eight frescoes up to the present time, Miss Brenner presents only six reproductions — and four of the six are details and one a sketch. Each illustration is numbered and at the end of the book is a section entitled "Notes on Illustrations" containing some discussion of most of the pictures. It would have been far easier for the reader if the shorter of the notes had been placed under the pictures described and the longer ones at the end of each chapter. Arbitrarily mixed in with these notes, where you would least expect to find it, is a lot of valuable information on the lives and works of the painters. However, as none of this is referred to in the general index it is not easily available. Also there is no index whatever to the reproductions themselves, a most unfortunate omission.

In its physical make-up the book is inexcusably bulky, its leaves being made of what might more nearly be described as cardboard than paper. Across the top of each page extends a heavy black bar which, though evidently intended to "lend character," only results in an ugly unbalanced page.

Miss Brenner could have greatly increased the pleasure of her readers by furnishing some key to the pronunciations of the Mexican names, especially those of Indian origin. It is not without interest to know that *v* is usually pronounced like *b* in such names as Rivera, that *Calles* does not rime with *Dallas*, and that the pronunciation of *Guadalupe* and *Oaxaca* both begin with a *w*. Such names as *Netzahualcoyotl*, *Chichen-Itza*, *Huitzilopochtli*, *Quetzalcoatl*, and *Xochimilco* can be a joy forever when you know how, but are only a source of mental anguish when you do not.

HOWARD T. FISHER

THE HOUND & HORN



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THE
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COMMENT

IN this number we begin Chronicles on Music, Drama and Fine Arts, which will continue from quarter to quarter. The Chronicles will not attempt to review all events. All they should attempt is an analysis of events that are enjoyable in themselves or that contain a promise of development; some matter and medium that might be further exploited; some discovery of an appreciative and responsible audience. The Chronicles will receive their sanction if they further the establishment of a technique, a common explored world, and a conscious attitude within a convention of ideas among both the artists and the society to which they appeal. The establishment of a technique, a common world, ideas and a society will supply a national capital or provincial capitals. Without capitals there have been no cultures. These statements are abstract. They must be when artists are nomads and the public is scattered.

MUSIC
DRAMA
FINE ARTS

STUART SHERMAN

DURING the presidential campaign of 1916 Stuart Sherman, writing to an academic colleague, expressed his views on the political situation. Nothing in Messrs. Zeitlin and Woodbridge's *Life and Letters*[1] helps us to characterize him as an intellectual figure more sharply. "I am for Wilson," he wrote, "for a large number of reasons set forth by democrats and others. . . . He strikes me as the most civilized mind that has appeared prominently in public life in my time; and I think he will do more, far more, to civilize the public mind and conscience of America than anyone else in sight. . . . He has persuasion, charm, elevation of style, genuine high quality of thought and feeling in his public utterances. . . . Wilson has genius, too [as well as Roosevelt], and of the refined quality; there is a certain French element in the man's mind, a certain genuine urbanity, amenity, and distinguished intellectual quality which I think are very good for the American people, and which they will learn to value more and more when they get over their appetite for the coarser fare to which they have been chiefly accustomed in the past."

In these sentences we have, to use an old phrase, the real Stuart Sherman. His interest for later times — indeed, his interest for us — is that he embodies, more completely than any other writer, the moral and intellectual quality of the Wilsonian era; and it would not be farther from the truth than most phrases get to call him the Woodrow Wilson of

[1] *Life and Letters of Stuart P. Sherman.* By Jacob Zeitlin and Homer Woodbridge. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 1929. $10.00.

literary criticism. Even as personalities the two men had much in common: in both there is the same moral fervor, never genuinely clarified; the same rather dry idealism; the same capacity to inspire personal loyalty and to provoke personal rather than disinterested criticism; the same singular lapses of candor; the same combination of inflexibility and fickleness; the same irreducible salience as men. More specifically Sherman was essentially Wilsonian in his point of view: his "philosophy," like Wilson's, was the product of inherited Protestantism and old-fashioned Jeffersonian confidence in the plain man. In his early life it was the prestige of his Congregational forebears that had the upper hand: in his later years it was the Jeffersonian tradition; at no point did he wander beyond the concentric circles of those two consistent loyalties. One has only to re-read *The New Freedom* with Stuart Sherman's life and work freshly in mind in order to feel the full weight of the analogy: the two men face their intricate contemporary problems with the same high-mindedness, and simplify their solutions with the same belated formulas. Only the cynical will fail to detect what is somehow precious in both.

But the moment for which Wilson and Sherman were spokesmen has irrevocably passed, and it is now a question of estimating the permanent vitality of their thought. Exaggerated claims have been made for both men, and for Stuart Sherman no less than for Woodrow Wilson. His dramatic change of profession in his early forties and the shocking abruptness of his death obscured for the time being the real value of his work. It was so natural to regret the untimely passing of a vivid personality, and the premature termination of an interesting personal experiment, that many people were led to misjudge the tragedy. It was very generally alleged

that Sherman had abandoned an earlier point of view, was passing through a period of profound readjustment, and would ultimately have worked his way through to a position that would have made him the critical leader of a new age. Certainly he had broken off what relations he had had with the men who influenced his twenties — Professor Babbitt and Mr. More; certainly he was writing of many "young people" without his former superciliousness; certainly his personal life — as one gathers from Messrs. Zeitlin and Woodbridge — was taking on a warmth and vivacity it had not had in his early maturity. But these changes have been vastly overstated. To re-read the essays Sherman wrote for the *Tribune* in his last two years — the essays collected in *Critical Woodcuts* (1926) and *The Main Stream* (1927) — is not to feel that he was on the verge of a momentous discovery; is not to feel that he would long have continued to speak with authority for a later period. It is to feel that his mind had already demonstrated its full quality and betrayed its pronounced limitations.

Clues to those limitations are scattered throughout the two volumes. Everywhere there is the stamp of the academic liberal, everywhere the stamp of the literary popularizer. In an essay on Edith Wharton, "The Mother's Recompense" is welcomed as "another symmetrical, flawlessly finished little masterpiece." The prose of Anatole France is elsewhere characterized as "paragraph by paragraph . . . the most perfect speech uttered in our time." Mr. Wilbur Abbott's preposterous book on *The New Barbarians* is respectfully discussed as a counter-irritant to "the depressing cynicism of chronic croakers who are enjoying 'the decay of capitalist civilization,' 'the failure of democracy,' 'the bankruptcy of political government,' and 'the downfall of western civilization.'" Of Don

Marquis' *The Dark Hours*: "I believe this to be a great tragedy, greatly conceived and written with austere sincerity." In perhaps the most heated essay of all Stevenson is defended against his recent detractors as incarnating the noblest sides of the modern temper. Chekhov is praised, not as a writer, but as a man who early formulated for himself a sound "ethical code." Of *An American Tragedy*: "I do not know where else in American fiction one can find the situation here presented dealt with so fearlessly, so intelligently [sic], so exhaustively, so veraciously, and *therefore* with such unexceptionable moral effect." And if, in the attempt to get beyond particular judgments, one tries to take in the drift of the two books as a whole, one is merely bewildered by the vagueness and looseness of a critical method by which Sherwood Anderson and William Beebe, Rose Macaulay and Barrett Wendell, W. C. Brownell and Llewellyn Powys can be made to lie down together in the warmth of a general approbation.

The truth is, Stuart Sherman's mind was of the type in which brilliance, liveliness, susceptibility, and speed take the place of true penetration and lucidity. He was an admirable teacher, an admirable commencement speaker, and an admirable journalist: his achievements in these directions are the measure of his powers. Despite what appeared to be the rigidity of his earliest views, he was at heart an eclectic; and, like all eclectics, he shrank from committing himself to the fundamental. Much has been made of his abandonment of a youthful devotion to the system of Babbitt and More: the hospitality of his later criticism is represented as a paradoxical shift from the rigor of his first essays. But one goes back to the volume *On Contemporary Literature* (1917) and discovers, not a deep personal apprehension of the principles of humanism, but a skillful exploitation of its formulas by a brilliant young

Stevensonian who has not yet seen through his aversion to the "unpleasantness" of writers such as Dreiser, Moore, Anatole France, Wells, and Synge. At the time the essays were written, Mr. More was disconcerted by the excess of Sherman's enthusiasm for Arnold Bennett, and his failure to see "the reservations which must be made when praising his somewhat Philistine art"; and Mr. Babbitt naturally demurred at Sherman's recognition of Meredith as a true humanist. Both Mr. More and Mr. Babbitt may well have been given pause by such evidences of Sherman's perfunctory adoption of their philosophy. They might have been equally disturbed by the lack of candor with which, in the destructive essays, the facts were sometimes twisted to make them fit the formula.

A convenient example is the well-known essay on "The Exoticism of John Synge." Now that we have the letters of Sherman's young manhood to guide us it is easy to see that there was something in Synge's vein of harshness, and in the sombreness that lies behind both his comedies and his tragedies, that must have been repugnant to a man of Sherman's strenuous and sanguine make-up. But it is also true that Synge's work bears some of the familiar stigmata of romanticism, and it was upon these that Sherman leapt. Unhappily he leapt too hard, and proved so much too much as to discredit his critical insight. If Synge is to be made out a thoroughgoing romantic, at any cost, it is necessary to show that his comic spirit is Arcadian rather than corrective, and that his tragedy is based on pathetic resignation rather than on struggle. This indeed is what Sherman argues. "Synge's comedies end in a kind of ironical bewilderment. His, indeed, is outlaw comedy with gypsy laughter coming from somewhere in the shrubbery by the roadside, pealing out against church and state, and man and wife, and all the ordinances of civil life." After such a

statement one wonders whether *The Well of the Saints* and *The Playboy of the Western World* are even under consideration — or, if they are, what kinds of folly, what kinds of sham, are worthier of laughter than the follies and shams that are laughed at in them. And so of the tragedies, especially *Riders to the Sea* — it "is not a tragedy at all, because it is not a drama. . . . Protagonist in the proper sense of the word there is none; no act of the will turning against destiny as a token of human participation in that divine energy into which death resumes us all." No doubt "act of the will" needs definition; but in the ordinary sense of the phrase what else than this is the resolution of the young islander, Bartley, to take his horses across to the mainland in defiance of the natural forces that have already borne so heavily on his kin? As for *Deirdre*, Sherman says little of it; but of course it would be easy to argue that the heroine of the play defies Conchubar in a spirit not utterly unlike that in which Creon is defied by Antigone. At this point, it is true, there are differences; but Sherman says nothing of them, and he leaves us with the air of a man who has proved a case, not of a man who has clarified a truth.

The particular point would not be worth dwelling on if it were not emblematic of Sherman's inveterate shallowness. The injustice to Synge — indeed, even to the other writers dealt with in that volume — we can pretty easily afford to take calmly. It is a matter of greater moment, an occasion for more acute regret, that Sherman's next three volumes should also have failed to be deeply and decisively critical. His attention during these years was turning more and more to the problems of American life; his interest fixed itself more and more definitely on American literature and the American tradition. *Americans* (1922), *The Genius of America* (1923),

and *Points of View* (1924), are the record of that process; and to go back over them is to renew an old disappointment. In many ways Sherman was admirably qualified for the task he set himself — the task of reinterpreting American literature and clarifying the effectual American traditions so as to bridge the gap between the intellectuals and the plain man. His own personal traditions were entirely American, and he had lived in all the great sections of the republic except the far south. He had perhaps traveled too little in Europe, but he was widely read in European literatures, and his intellectual equipment was anything but provincial. He had, moreover, a true sense of the necessity of working forward from within a continuous cultural experience; he had a glimpse into the legitimate pragmatism of the moralist and the critic. But unluckily he fell a victim to the illegitimate pragmatism of the liberal and the essayist; and in consequence the total impression made by these volumes is of melting colors and blurred lines. Casuistry, if it is to pay, must be infinitely more ingenious than this.

"Our 'bourgeoisie,' no less than our 'peasantry,' are on the verge of a cultural revolt," Sherman came to feel; "they are quarrelling with the quality of their civilization." To meet the situation, Sherman gradually formulated two principles of criticism: (1) Americans must cling to and refresh their own cultural tradition, the soul of which is seventeenth-century Puritanism and nineteenth-century Transcendentalism, and its body Jeffersonian democracy; and (2) literature must be made safe for democracy; the plain man must be shown how relevant art may be to his own needs. Slippery half-truths, both of them; and how refractory they proved in Sherman's grasp! Take the essay on "What is a Puritan?" and consider whether the tough Calvinism of Endicott and

Mather could be more smilingly robbed of its sting, or whether the whole complicated historical setting could be more breezily ignored. Take the essay on Franklin and consider whether any distinctions at all are made between what was enlightened in his thought and what was merely Philistine. Take the essay on Hawthorne, and consider whether Hawthorne's real case against his civilization is ever hinted at. Or the essay on Whitman — who, it is argued, would have been a Bolshevik-baiter if he had lived in our post-bellum period. Or perhaps most strikingly of all the essay on Andrew Carnegie, as an exhibit of Sherman's uncritical acceptance of the appearance for the reality, his pervasive pragmatic regard for the *fait accompli*, his sanguine willingness to neglect the darker side of the picture. From this essay no reader would ever gather that Carnegie stood for some of the things that have made American life, in Sherman's words, "so lacking in elevation and beauty; . . . so humdrum, so dreadfully uninteresting." And indeed, from the volumes as a whole, no reader would ever gather that American history has been a very intricate tangle of creative and destructive forces, a picture painted with baroque violence of chiaroscuro. It is only in the full concreteness of their setting that Puritanism or Jeffersonianism have any valid meaning; to try to distil their pleasant essence and make it viable in a radically altered setting, is to beg questions on the threshold of disaster.

There is thus a kind of collegiate tameness and unreality in Sherman's attempt to revive American traditions. There is a kind of commencement vagueness, similarly, in his plea for the democratizing of culture. One may agree that there is a sense in which culture is radically democratic: one may agree that nothing is to be gained and much to be lost by critics who turn their back upon the plain man. And one may subscribe to

the principle which Sherman appeals to repeatedly in this connection, that great literature is deeply ethical. Agreeing with him to this extent, one would nevertheless insist that culture is truly democratic only when it preserves its own spirit of discrimination, its own rigor of preference; and that if literature is ethical it is by no means merely "moral" in the plain man's usual view. It is, I think, a painstaking and not simply a captious judgment of Sherman's middle and later writings to contend that these distinctions are rarely suggested there. The essay on censorship, for example, "liberal" as it is, assumes a crude connection between literature and conduct that no creative writer could ever act upon. In the essay on "The Genius of America" it is argued that the artist must coöperate with the prevailing mores to an extent that would be the death of true "invention." In the essay "Towards an American Type" it is argued that because the American people admire athletics, advertising, speed records, sanitation, education, and good health, their aspiration is toward a type of "athletic asceticism" which it is the business of the critical mind to foster. As if it were not the business of the critical mind to say, in the interests of ideal good, just what is amiss with a people to whom advertising and speed records are admirable things! Surely the plain man is to be properly served, not by this kind of flattery, but by the exaction from him of his best possibilities.

If sound criticism must always be *radical* criticism — if stringency, impatience, and a certain harshness are the very spirit of its method — then Sherman was not a first-rate critic. He accepted too warmly much that was hopelessly mediocre both in literature and in practice; and fought shy too cautiously of much that was dangerously first-rate. In short the "half-way" taint of the Wilsonian era infects too much of

what he did for us to regard his criticism as of more than historical interest. In that light, however, and above all *personally,* Stuart Sherman deserves a warm and friendly treatment that it has not been the purpose of this note to give him. A man may not be a first-rate literary critic and still have extraordinary and exhilarating charm as a man and even as a certain sort of writer. Such charm Stuart Sherman had in rich measure: it is the achievement of Messrs. Zeitlin and Woodbridge in their *Life and Letters* to make one conscious of it with accumulating force. Intensity as distinguished from mere vigor of emphasis is not a common quality among either schoolmasters or journalists; and intensity was the keynote of Sherman's personality. It gives the story of his career a genuine imaginative sweep, and it will doubtless long preserve him as a human being in the memory of many men who know him only through this book.

NEWTON ARVIN

TWO POEMS

HYMN TO DISPEL HATRED AT MIDNIGHT

Here where I watch the dew
That gathers by the door,
Here where the time is true
    And on the floor
My shadow stirs no more,

The slow night burns away.
Nay, neither I nor Time
Can manage quite to stay—
    We seek a clime
Bound in a moment's chime.

Men are like blades of grass
Beneath a winter sky,
The constellations pass,
    The air is dry
From star to living eye.

Hence unto God, unsought,
My anguish sets. O vain
The heart that hates! O nought
    So drenched in pain!
Grief will not turn again.

THE FALL OF LEAVES

The green has suddenly
Divided to pure flame,
Leaf-tongued from tree to tree.
Yea, where we stood it came.

This change may have no name.
Yet it was like a word
Spoken, and none to blame,
Alive where shadow stirred.

So was the instant blurred,
But as we waited there
The slow cry of a bird
Built up a scheme of air.

The vision of despair
Starts at the moment's bound,
Seethes from the vibrant air
With slow autumnal sound

Into the burning ground.

YVOR WINTERS

FLOWERING JUDAS

BRAGGIONI sits heaped upon the edge of a straight-backed chair much too small for him, and sings to Laura in a furry, mournful voice. Laura has begun to find reasons for avoiding her own house until the latest possible moment, for Braggioni is there almost every night. No matter how late she is, he will be sitting there with a surly, waiting expression, pulling at his kinky yellow hair, thumbing the strings of his guitar, snarling a tune under his breath. Lupe the Indian maid meets Laura at the door, and says with the flicker of a glance towards the upper room, "He waits."

Laura wishes to lie down, she is tired of her hairpins and the feel of her long tight sleeves, but she says to him, "Have you a new song for me this evening?" If he says yes, she asks him to sing it. If he says no, she remembers his favorite one, and asks him to sing it again. Lupe brings her a cup of chocolate and a plate of rice, and Laura eats at the small table under the lamp, first inviting Braggioni, whose answer is always the same: "I have eaten, and besides, chocolate thickens the voice."

Laura says, "Sing, then," and Braggioni heaves himself into song. He scratches the guitar familiarly as though it were a pet animal, and sings passionately off key, taking the high notes in a prolonged painful squeal. Laura, who haunts the markets listening to the ballad singers, and stops every day to hear the blind boy playing his reed-flute in Sixteenth of September Street, listens to Braggioni with pitiless courtesy, because she dares not smile at his miserable per-

formance. Nobody dares to smile at him. Braggioni is cruel to every one, with a kind of specialized insolence, but he is so vain of his talents, and so sensitive to slights, it would require a cruelty and vanity greater than his own to lay a finger on the vast cureless wound of his self-esteem. It would require courage, too, for it is dangerous to offend him, and nobody has this courage.

Braggioni loves himself with such tenderness and amplitude and eternal charity that his followers — for he is a leader of men, a skilled revolutionist, and his skin has been punctured in honorable warfare — warm themselves in the reflected glow, and say to each other: "He has a real nobility, a love of humanity raised above mere personal affections." The excess of this self-love has flowed out, inconveniently for her, over Laura, who with so many others, owes her comfortable situation and her salary to him. When he is in a very good humor, he tells her, "I am tempted to forgive you for being a *gringa. Gringita!*" and Laura, burning, imagines herself leaning forward suddenly, and with a sound back-handed slap wiping the suety smile from his face. If he notices her eyes at these moments he gives no sign.

She knows what Braggioni would offer her, and she must resist tenaciously without appearing to resist, and if she could avoid it she would not admit even to herself the slow drift of his intention. During these long evenings which have spoiled a long month for her, she sits in her deep chair with an open book on her knees, resting her eyes on the consoling rigidity of the printed page when the sight and sound of Braggioni singing threaten to identify themselves with all her remembered afflictions and to add their weight to her uneasy premonitions of the future. The gluttonous bulk of Braggioni has become a symbol of her many disillusions, for a revolu-

tionist should be lean, animated by heroic faith, a vessel of abstract virtues. This is nonsense, she knows it now and is ashamed of it. Revolution must have leaders, and leadership is a career for energetic men. She is, her comrades tell her, full of romantic error, for what she defines as cynicism in them is merely "a developed sense of reality." She is almost too willing to say, "I am wrong, I suppose I don't really understand the principles," and afterward she makes a secret truce with herself, determined not to surrender her will to such expedient logic. But she cannot help feeling that she has been betrayed irreparably by the disunion between her way of living and her feeling of what life should be, and at times she is almost contented to rest in this sense of grievance as a private store of consolation. Sometimes she wishes to run away, but she stays. Now she longs to fly out of this room, down the narrow stairs, and into the street where the houses lean together like conspirators under a single mottled lamp, and leave Braggioni singing to himself.

Instead she looks at Braggioni, frankly and clearly, like a good child who understands the rules of behavior. Her knees cling together under sound blue serge, and her round white collar is not purposely nun-like. She wears the uniform of an idea, and has renounced vanities. She was born Roman Catholic, and in spite of her fear of being seen by someone who might make a scandal of it, she slips now and again into some crumbling little church, kneels on the chilly stone, and says a Hail Mary on the gold rosary she bought in Tehuantepec. It is no good and she ends by examining the altar with its tinsel flowers and ragged brocades, and feels tender about the battered doll-shape of some male saint whose white, lace-trimmed drawers hang limply around his ankles below the hieratic dignity of his velvet robe. She has encased herself in

a set of principles derived from her early training, leaving no detail of gesture or of personal taste untouched, and for this reason she will not wear lace made on machines. This is her private heresy, for in her special group the machine is sacred, and will be the salvation of the workers. She loves fine lace, and there is a tiny edge of fluted cobweb on this collar, which is one of twenty precisely alike, folded in blue tissue paper in the upper drawer of her clothes chest.

Braggioni catches her glance solidly as if he had been waiting for it, leans forward, balancing his paunch between his spread knees, and sings with tremendous emphasis, weighing his words. He has, the song relates, no father and no mother, nor even a friend to console him; lonely as a wave of the sea he comes and goes, lonely as a wave. His mouth opens round and yearns sideways, his balloon cheeks grow oily with the labor of song. He bulges marvellously in his expensive garments. Over his lavendar collar, crushed upon a purple necktie, held by a diamond hoop: over his ammunition belt of tooled leather worked in silver, buckled cruelly around his gasping middle: over the tops of his glossy yellow shoes Braggioni swells with ominous ripeness, his mauve silk hose stretched taut, his ankles bound with the stout leather thongs of his shoes.

When he stretches his eyelids at Laura she notes again that his eyes are the true tawny yellow cat's eyes. He is rich, not in money, he tells her, but in power, and this power brings with it the blameless ownership of things, and the right to indulge his love of small luxuries. "I have a taste for the elegant refinements," he said once, flourishing a yellow silk handkerchief before her nose; "Smell that? It is Jockey Club, imported from New York." Nonetheless he is wounded by life. He will say so presently. "It is true everything turns to

dust in the hand, to gall on the tongue." He sighs and his leather belt creaks like a saddle girth. "I am disappointed in everything as it comes. Everything." He shakes his head. "You, poor thing, you will be disappointed too. You are born for it. We are more alike than you realize in some things. Wait and see. Some day you will remember what I have told you, you will know that Braggioni was your friend."

Laura feels a slow chill, a purely physical sense of danger, a warning in her blood that violence, mutilation, a shocking death, wait for her with lessening patience. She has translated this fear into something homely, immediate, and sometimes hesitates before crossing the street. "My personal fate is nothing, except as the testimony of a mental attitude," she reminds herself, quoting from some forgotten philosophic primer, and is sensible enough to add, "Anyhow, I shall not be killed by an automobile if I can help it."

"It may be true I am as corrupt, in another way, as Braggioni," she thinks in spite of herself, "as callous, as incomplete," and if this is so, any kind of death seems preferable. Still she sits quietly, she does not run. Where could she go? Uninvited she has promised herself to this place; she can no longer imagine herself as living in another country, and there is no pleasure in remembering her life before she came here.

Precisely what is the nature of this devotion, its true motives, and what are its obligations? Laura cannot say. She spends part of her days in Xochimilco, nearby, teaching Indian children to say in English, "The cat is on the mat." When she appears in the class room they crowd about her with smiles on their wise, innocent clay-colored faces, crying, "Good morning, my titcher!" in immaculate voices, and they make of her desk a fresh garden of flowers every day.

During her leisure she goes to union meetings and listens

to busy important voices quarrelling over tactics, methods, internal politics. She visits the prisoners of her own political faith in their cells, where they entertain themselves with counting cockroaches, repenting of their indiscretions, composing their memoirs, writing out manifestoes and plans for their comrades who are still walking about free, hands in pockets, sniffing fresh air. Laura brings them food and cigarettes and a little money, and she brings messages disguised in equivocal phrases from the men outside who dare not set foot in the prison for fear of disappearing into the cells kept empty for them. If the prisoners confuse night and day, and complain, "Dear Little Laura, time doesn't pass in this infernal hole, and I won't know when it is time to sleep unless I have a reminder," she brings them their favorite narcotics, and says in a tone that does not wound them with pity, "Tonight will really be night for you," and though her Spanish amuses them, they find her comforting, useful. If they lose patience and all faith, and curse the slowness of their friends in coming to their rescue with money and influence, they trust her not to repeat everything, and if she inquires, "Where do you think we can find money, or influence?" they are certain to answer, "Well, there is Braggioni, why doesn't he do something?"

She smuggles letters from headquarters to men hiding from firing squads in back streets in mildewed houses, where they sit in tumbled beds and talk bitterly as if all Mexico were at their heels, when Laura knows positively they might appear at the band concert in the Alameda on Sunday morning, and no one would notice them. But Braggioni says, "Let them sweat a little. The next time they may be careful. It is very restful to have them out of the way for a while." She is not afraid to knock on any door in any street after midnight, and

enter in the darkness, and say to one of these men who is really in danger: "They will be looking for you — seriously — tomorrow morning after six. Here is some money from Vicente. Go to Vera Cruz and wait."

She borrows money from the Roumanian agitator to give to his bitter enemy the Polish agitator. The favor of Braggioni is their disputed territory, and Braggioni holds the balance nicely, for he can use them both. The Polish agitator talks love to her over café tables, hoping to exploit what he believes is her secret sentimental preference for him, and he gives her misinformation which he begs her to repeat as the solemn truth to certain persons. The Roumanian is more adroit. He is generous with his money in all good causes, and lies to her with an air of ingenuous candor, as if he were her good friend and confident. She never repeats anything they may say. Braggioni never asks questions. He has other ways to discover all that he wishes to know about them.

Nobody touches her, but all praise her grey eyes, and the soft, round under lip which promises gayety, yet is always grave, nearly always firmly closed: and they cannot understand why she is in Mexico. She walks back and forth on her errands, with puzzled eyebrows, carrying her little folder of drawings and music and school papers. No dancer dances more beautifully than Laura walks, and she inspires some amusing, unexpected ardors, which cause little gossip, because nothing comes of them. A young captain who had been a soldier in Zapata's army attempted, during a horseback ride near Cuernavaca, to express his desire for her with the noble simplicity befitting a rude folk-hero: but gently, because he was gentle. This gentleness was his defeat, for when he alighted, and removed her foot from the stirrup, and essayed to draw her down into his arms, her horse, ordinarily a tame

one, shied fiercely, reared and plunged away. The young hero's horse careered blindly after his stable-mate, and the hero did not return to the hotel until rather late that evening. At breakfast he came to her table in full charro dress, grey buckskin jacket and trousers with strings of silver buttons down the leg, and he was in a humorous, careless mood. "May I sit with you?" and "You are a wonderful rider. I was terrified that you might be thrown and dragged. I should never have forgiven myself. But I cannot admire you enough for your riding!"

"I learned to ride in Arizona," said Laura.

"If you will ride with me again this morning, I promise you a horse that will not shy with you," he said. But Laura remembered that she must return to Mexico City at noon.

Next morning the children made a celebration and spent their playtime writing on the blackboard, "We lov ar ticher," and with tinted chalks they drew wreaths of flowers around the words. The young hero wrote her a letter: "I am a very foolish, wasteful, impulsive man. I should have first said I love you, and then you would not have run away. But you shall see me again." Laura thought, "I must send him a box of colored crayons," but she was trying to forgive herself for having spurred her horse at the wrong moment.

A brown, shock-haired youth came and stood in her patio one night and sang like a lost soul for two hours, but Laura could think of nothing to do about it. The moonlight spread a wash of gauzy silver over the clear spaces of the garden, and the shadows were cobalt blue. The scarlet blossoms of the judas tree were dull purple, and the names of the colors repeated themselves automatically in her mind, while she watched, not the boy, but his shadow, fallen like a dark garment across the fountain rim, trailing in the water. Lupe

came silently and whispered expert counsel in her ear: "If you will throw him one little flower, he will sing another song or two and go away." Laura threw the flower, and he sang a last song and went away with the flower tucked in the band of his hat. Lupe said, "He is one of the organizers of the Typographers Union, and before that he sold corridas in the Merced market, and before that, he came from Guanajuato, where I was born. I would not trust any man, but I trust least those from Guanajuato."

She did not tell Laura that he would be back again the next night, and the next, nor that he would follow her at a certain fixed distance around the Merced market, through the Zocolo, up Francisco I. Madero Avenue, and so along the Paseo de la Reforma to Chapultepec Park, and into the Philosopher's Footpath, still with that flower withering in his hat, and an indivisible attention in his eyes.

Now Laura is accustomed to him, it means nothing except that he is nineteen years old and is observing a convention with all propriety, as though it were founded on a law of nature, which in the end it might well prove to be. He is beginning to write poems which he prints on a wooden press, and he leaves them stuck like handbills in her door. She is pleasantly disturbed by the abstract, unhurried watchfulness of his black eyes which will in time turn easily towards another object. She tells herself that throwing the flower was a mistake, for she is twenty-two years old and knows better; but she refuses to regret it, and persuades herself that her negation of all external events as they occur is a sign that she is gradually perfecting herself in the stoicism she strives to cultivate against that disaster she fears, though she cannot name it.

She is not at home in the world. Every day she teaches chil-

dren who remain strangers to her, though she loves their tender round hands and their charming opportunist savagery. She knocks at unfamiliar doors not knowing whether a friend or a stranger shall answer, and even if a known face emerges from the sour gloom of that unknown interior, still it is the face of a stranger. No matter what this stranger says to her, nor what her message to him, the very cells of her flesh reject knowledge and kinship in one monotonous word. No. No. No. She draws her strength from this one holy talismanic word which does not suffer her to be led into evil. Denying everything, she may walk anywhere in safety, she looks at everything without amazement.

No, repeats this firm unchanging voice of her blood; and she looks at Braggioni without amazement. He is a great man, he wishes to impress this simple girl who covers her great round breasts with thick dark cloth, and who hides long, invaluably beautiful legs under a heavy skirt. She is almost thin except for the incomprehensible fullness of her breasts, like a nursing mother's, and Braggioni, who considers himself a judge of women, speculates again on the puzzle of her notorious virginity, and takes the liberty of speech which she permits without a sign of modesty, indeed, without any sort of sign, which is disconcerting.

"You think you are so cold, gringita! Wait and see. You will surprise yourself some day! May I be there to advise you!" He stretches his eyelids at her, and his ill-humored cat's eyes waver in a separate glance for the two points of light marking the opposite ends of a smoothly drawn path between the swollen curve of her breasts. He is not put off by that blue serge, nor by her resolutely fixed gaze. There is all the time in the world. His cheeks are bellying with the wind of song. "O girl with the dark eyes," he sings, and re-

considers. "But yours are not dark. I can change all that. O girl with the green eyes, you have stolen my heart away!" Then his mind wanders to the song, and Laura feels the weight of his attention being shifted elsewhere. Singing thus, he seems harmless, he is quite harmless, there is nothing to do but sit patiently and say "No," when the moment comes. She draws a full breath, and her mind wanders, too, but not far. She dares not wander too far.

Not for nothing has Braggioni taken pains to be a good revolutionist and a professional lover of humanity. He will never die of it. He has the malice, the cleverness, the wickedness, the sharpness of wit, the hardness of heart, stipulated for loving the world profitably. *He will never die of it.* He will live to see himself kicked out from his feeding trough by other hungry world-saviours. Traditionally he must sing in spite of his life which drives him to bloodshed, he tells Laura, for his father was a Tuscany peasant who drifted to Yucatan and married a Maya woman: a woman of race, an aristocrat. They gave him the love and knowledge of music, thus: and under the rip of his thumbnail, the strings of the instrument complain like exposed nerves.

Once he was called Delgadito by all the girls and married women who ran after him; he was so scrawny all his bones showed under his thin cotton clothing, and he could squeeze his emptiness to the very backbone with his two hands. He was a poet and the revolution was only a dream then; too many women loved him and sapped away his youth, and he could never find enough to eat anywhere, anywhere! Now he is a leader of men, crafty men who whisper in his ear, hungry men who wait for hours outside his office for a word with him, emaciated men with wild faces who waylay him at the street gate with a timid, "Comrade, let me tell you . . ." and they

blow the foul breath from their empty stomachs in his face.

He is always sympathetic. He gives them handfuls of small coins from his own pocket, he promises them work, there will be demonstrations, they must join the unions and attend the meetings, above all they must be on the watch for spies. They are closer to him than his own brothers, without them he can do nothing — until tomorrow, comrade!

Until tomorrow. "They are stupid, they are lazy, they are treacherous, they would cut my throat for nothing," he says to Laura. He has good food and abundant drink, he hires an automobile and drives in the Paseo on Sunday morning, and enjoys plenty of sleep in a soft bed beside a wife who dares not disturb him; and he sits pampering his bones in easy billows of fat, singing to Laura, who knows and thinks these things about him. When he was fifteen, he tried to drown himself because he loved a girl, his first love, and she laughed at him. "A thousand women have paid for that," and his tight little mouth turns down at the corners. Now he perfumes his hair with Jockey Club, and confides to Laura: "One woman is really as good as another for me, in the dark. I prefer them all."

His wife organizes unions among the girls in the cigarette factories, and walks in picket lines, and even speaks at meetings in the evening. But she cannot be brought to acknowledge the benefits of true liberty. "I tell her I must have my freedom, net. She does not understand my point of view." Laura has heard this many times. Braggioni scratches the guitar and meditates. "She is an instinctively virtuous woman, pure gold, no doubt of that. If she were not, I should lock her up, and she knows it."

His wife, who works so hard for the good of the factory girls, employs part of her leisure lying on the floor weeping

because there are so many women in the world, and only one husband for her, and she never knows where nor when to look for him. He told her: "Unless you can learn to cry only when I am not here, I must go away for good." That day he went away and took a room at the Hotel Madrid.

It is this month of separation for the sake of higher principles that has been spoiled not only for Mrs. Braggioni, whose sense of reality is beyond criticism, but for Laura who feels herself bogged in a nightmare. Tonight Laura envies Mrs. Braggioni, who is alone, and free to weep as much as she pleases about a concrete wrong. Laura has just come from a visit to the prison, and she is waiting for tomorrow with a bitter anxiety as if tomorrow may not come, but time may be caught immovably in this hour, with herself transfixed, Braggioni singing on forever, and Eugenio's body not yet discovered by the guard.

Braggioni says: "Are you going to sleep?" Almost before she can shake her head, he begins telling her about the May-day disturbances coming on in Morelia, for the Catholics hold a festival in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and the Socialists celebrate their martyrs on that day. "There will be two independent processions, starting from either end of town, and they will march until they meet, and the rest depends . . ." He asks her to oil and load his pistols. Standing up, he unbuckles his ammunition belt, and spreads it laden across her knees. Laura sits with the shells slipping through the cleaning cloth dipped in oil, and he says again he cannot understand why she works so hard for the revolutionary idea unless she loves some man who is in it. "Are you not in love with some one?" "No," says Laura. "And no one is in love with you?" "No." "Then it is your own fault. No woman need go begging. Why, what is the matter with you? The legless beggar

woman in the Alameda has a perfectly faithful lover. Did you know that?"

Laura peers down the pistol barrel and says nothing, but a long, slow faintness rises and subsides in her; Braggioni curves his swollen fingers around the throat of the guitar and softly smothers the music out of it, and when she hears him again he seems to have forgotten her, and is speaking in the hypnotic voice he uses when talking in small rooms to a listening, close-gathered crowd. Some day this world, now seemingly so composed and eternal, to the edges of every sea shall be merely a tangle of gaping trenches, of crashing walls and broken bodies. Everything must be torn from its accustomed place where it has rotted for centuries, hurled skyward and distributed, cast down again clean as rain, without separate identity. Nothing shall survive that the stiffened hands of poverty have created for the rich and no one shall be left alive except the elect spirits destined to procreate a new world cleansed of cruelty and injustice, ruled by benevolent anarchy: "Pistols are good, I love them, cannon are even better, but in the end I pin my faith to good dynamite," he concludes, and strokes the pistol lying in her hands. "Once I dreamed of destroying this city, in case it offered resistance to General Ortiz, but it fell into his hands like an over-ripe pear."

He is made restless by his own words, rises and stands waiting. Laura holds up the belt to him: "Put that on, and go kill somebody in Morelia, and you will be happier," she says softly. The presence of death in the room makes her bold. "Today, I found Eugenio going into a stupor. He refused to allow me to call the prison doctor. He had taken all the tablets I brought him yesterday. He said he took them because he was bored."

"He is a fool, and his death is his own business," says Braggioni, fastening his belt carefully.

"I told him if he had waited only a little while longer, you would have got him set free," says Laura. "He said he did not want to wait."

"He is a fool and we are well rid of him," says Braggioni, reaching for his hat.

He goes away. Laura knows his mood has changed, she will not see him any more for a while. He will send word when he needs her to go on errands into strange streets, to speak to the strange faces that will appear, like clay masks with the power of human speech, to mutter their thanks to Braggioni for his help. Now she is free, and she thinks, I must run while there is time. But she does not go.

Braggioni enters his own house where for a month his wife has spent many hours every night weeping and tangling her hair upon her pillow. She is weeping now, and she weeps more at the sight of him, the cause of all her sorrows. He looks about the room. Nothing is changed, the smells are good and familiar, he is well acquainted with the woman who comes toward him with no reproach except grief in her face. He says to her tenderly: "You are so good, please do not cry any more, you dear good creature." She says, "Are you tired, my angel? Sit here and I will wash your feet." She brings a bowl of water, and kneeling, unlaces his shoes, and when from her knees she raises her sad eyes under her blackened lids, he is sorry for everything, and bursts into tears. "Ah, yes, I am hungry, I am tired, let us eat something together," he says, between sobs. His wife leans her head on his arm and says, "Forgive me!" and this time he is refreshed by the solemn, endless rain of her tears.

Laura takes off her serge dress and puts on a white linen nightgown and goes to bed. She turns her head a little to one side, and lying still, reminds herself that it is time to sleep. Numbers tick in her brain like little clocks, soundless doors

close of themselves around her. If you would sleep, you must not remember anything, the children will say tomorrow, good morning, my teacher, the poor prisoners who come every day bringing flowers to their jailor. 1-2-3-4-5 — it is monstrous to confuse love with revolution, night with day, life with death — ah, Eugenio!

The tolling of the midnight bell is a signal, but what does it mean? Get up, Laura, and follow me: come out of your sleep, out of your bed, out of this strange house. What are you doing in this house? Without a word, without fear she rose and reached for Eugenio's hand, but he eluded her with a sharp, sly smile and drifted away. This is not all, there is more — Murderer, he said, follow me, I will show you a new country, but it is far away and we must hurry. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand, no; and she clung first to the stair rail, and then to the topmost branch of the judas tree that bent down slowly and set her upon the earth, and then to the rocky ledge of a cliff, and then to the jagged wave of a sea that was not water but a desert of crumbling stone. Where are you taking me, she asked in wonder but without fear. To death, and it is a long way off, and we must hurry, said Eugenio. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand. Then eat these flowers, poor prisoner, said Eugenio in a voice of pity, take and eat: and from the judas tree he stripped the warm bleeding flowers, and held them to her lips. She saw that his hand was fleshless, a cluster of small white petrified branches, and his eye sockets were without light, but she ate the flowers greedily for they satisfied both hunger and thirst. Murderer! said Eugenio, and Cannibal! This is my body and my blood. Laura cried No! and at the sound of her own voice, she awoke trembling, and was afraid to sleep again.

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

AMBERGRIS

This body, tapped of every drop of breath,
In vast corruption of its swollen pride,
Is perfected to be the whale of death;
Yet, I believe, the hand that plumbs its side
Will gather dissolution's sweet increase,
Exquisite fern of death — in nature, ambergris.

Meanwhile, thinking of love, I have been dressed
For such destruction. Though it surely break,
Come pluck the deep wild kernel of my breast,
That wafer of devotion, and partake
Of its compacted sweetness, till it bring
The soul to rise upon the fleshly wing.

If gentle hearts are scorned, in scorn of it
I shall immerse it in such bitterness,
Bathe every pulse in such an acid wit,
That from my mammoth, cold, and featureless
Event of age, my enemies will flee,
Whereas my friends will stay and pillage me.

Stanley J. Kunitz

HENRY ADAMS

A CRITICISM IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Preface

THESE chapters on the writings of Henry Adams illustrate two actuating forces of his nature. Let this nature, by conceit, take on the aspect of moving waters: deep feeling and poetic intellect is its one continual undertow, and detached mind the strong surface current in the contrary direction. As this seems the developing action of a lifetime, a complete and chronologically arranged edition of Adams' works can be of the greatest value for its description. No such edition exists, not even of the letters of which quite a number grace the biographies of Adams' friends. For the rest, works that he published in the seventies and eighties, and even the "Life of George Cabot Lodge," which appeared as late as 1911, are now out of print and forgotten.

In view of this, no adoration of scholarship could prompt, in the present instance, an unnecessary officiousness. The unpublished papers of Henry Adams, of which there must be enough to interest the sensitive and the intelligent, have not been sought out. Not so those once published anonymously and under a pseudonym.

The editor of the *North American*, asked whether any of the unsigned reviews in the old numbers of his magazine had been written by Adams, cordially submitted a list of about twenty-five, all considerable in length. The obscure shadow

of Adams' book reviews of the eighties might well be the sunshine of our magazine articles.

The librarian of Harvard also sent photostats of a suppressed review of Taylor's *Faust* bearing this note in Adams' handwriting:

"This notice, written originally by a strong admirer of Mr. Taylor, but much changed by me in tone, led to a protest from the author, and a request from Mr. Osgood that the notice should be suppressed. Which was done.

Henry Adams."

One might have gone further. One might have asked for photostats of Henry Adams' Class Oration of 1858, of his efforts in old Harvard College magazines, of his articles for the press. But bones and a death's-head are not to be resurrected, even if they remain. Adams, who was reserved, knew how to warn people. In 1908 he wrote to one of his nieces:

"You must not read what you call your book (the "Education"), because the Chartres is good enough for you, and me too, and the pigs all about."

May 7, 1924

Introduction

THERE is a fine reason for not writing about Henry Adams. His personal quality forbids it. Yet fine people are studied, and personal quality excites antagonism. The fact is, very little about Adams has been written, outside of a few sincere and understanding pages of several scholars and friends who worked with him. Queer spurts of captious criticism have appeared under the names of Housatonic (pseud.), Baldensperger, Bruce, Shafer, Sheldon. Idealism has come, warm, from Goucher College to prod a cold Bostonian to life. The absolute has spoken through Mr. Bradford and Mr. More.

Even Brooks Adams found himself concerned more with his grandfather, John Quincy, rather than with his brother — though his original intention was quite different. The very practical, yet interesting, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., who, as a boy, boxed Henry's ear wrote to him in this manner:

"You set up for a philosopher. You write letters à la Horace Walpole; you talk of loafing round Europe; you pretend to have seen life. Such twaddle makes me feel like a giant Warrington talking to an infant Pendennis. *You* 'tired of this life'! *You* more and more 'callous and indifferent about your own fortunes!' . . . You are beaten back everywhere before you are twenty-four, and finally writing philosophical letters you grumble at the strange madness of the times and haven't faith in God and the spirit of your age. What do you mean by thinking, much less writing such stuff? . . . How am I throwing myself away? Isn't a century's work of my ancestors worth a struggle to preserve? . . . Come — no more of this. Don't get into this vein again, or if you do, keep it to yourself. We shall come out all right and if we don't the world will. Excuse me if I have been rough, but it will do you good . . ."

Henry must have smiled and seen no need for excuses. He was taught, more or less, to expect this of brothers. He would have smiled to see Mr. Bradford quote an excellent tirade to show Charles Francis agreeing with Mr. Bradford. To treat Henry Adams as essentially a member of a family is as critical as saying of Wordsworth's poetry — he composed it mumbling to Dorothy.

Henry Adams' critics have accused him of desiccated thinking and of not doing anything. More than anything else they have deplored his lack of seriousness. They have found him suffering from moral debility. Before God and garrulous Trojans who once passed the half-century mark the Savonarola of Washington, D. C., stands wanting.

"His account of himself is so amusing," winks Mr. Samuel

McChord Crothers through an entire article in the *Yale Review*; and, commenting on Adams' evasion of fighting political bosses who kick with the spirit of bronchos, he ventures: "It never occurred to Theodore Roosevelt to get out of the way of either."

Mr. William Cabell Bruce, the most voluminous among John Randolph biographers, says in effect: Henry Adams was a disappointed presidential candidate, a useless academician, a snake in the grass. His "Education" and the "John Randolph" are sufficient evidence. If it is doubtful that the "Harvard professor" was wrong about John Randolph, read Whittier's encomium:

> "Bard, Sage, and Tribune! in himself
> All moods of mind contrasting,
> The tenderest wail of human woe
> The scorn like lightning blasting;
> The pathos which from rival eyes
> Unwilling tears could summon,
> The stinging taunt, the fiery burst
> Of hatred scarcely human!"

While these rhetorical spangles may be shed and Whittier still remains delectable for an old man with a singing voice, the temper of Cabell Bruce is not quite as congenial. A little fun might be had over such assonance as "summon" and "human"; there is no fun in a defence of, for example, "Roony" Lee set over against Henry Adams. When Fortinbras and Hamlet meet, Hamlet wishes him all that is his properly, but does well to remain quite dead. Henry Adams wrote of "Roony" — "No one knew enough to know how ignorant he was" — and Mr. Bruce probably never will understand an attitude which is always ready to go one step

further: No one knows enough to know how ignorant anyone is.

Enter Mr. Paul Elmer More: precisely, that's the trouble with Mr. Adams; he is, what might conveniently be called, a sentimental nihilist. "Our latest Puritan rediscovered woman on her mediaeval throne and chants to her in modern speech the ancient paean to Alma Venus Genetrix. It would be a petty business (why?) to unravel the various motives that had impelled him on the devious way from the sturdy, if unloving protestantism of his race. He himself makes much of the motive of love as the aspect of infinite power which man can understand. . . . Was it the perfect irresponsibility of the Virgin, human no doubt, feminine perhaps, certainly not Puritan, that gave to our tired sceptic the illusion of having reached a comfortable goal after his long voyage of education? There is a fateful analogy between the irresponsibility of unreasoning Force and unreasoning love; and the Gods of Nietzsche and of Tolstoy are but the two faces of one god. To change the metaphor, if it may be done without disrespect, the image in the Cathedral of Chartres looks perilously like the ancient idol of Dinos decked out in petticoats."

Evidently, as late as the eleventh volume of his Shelbourne Essays, Mr. More is still afraid of petticoats. "In the Virgin," continues Mr. More, "Adams saw one symbol of Force comprehensible to the human heart, if not to the human brain." But positives and negatives have little to do with Adams' insight, and the heart and brain of it never make a dichotomy. The Virgin may be Dinos decked out in women's clothes; she may be irresponsible, illogical, feminine; but if she is an infinite number of things, she is fundamentally one. To Adams, her love was the beginning and the attainment. The fact of fertility and birth was the basis for religious fact. In line and

form her love, to Adams, may have had the ideal thinness of a Beatrice, but a Vita Nuova in the thinnest sense it was not.

Like Spinoza, Henry Adams found nature not perfectly safe. To both, this was no fault in nature. For practical ethics, Spinoza turned to love substance which never loved in return. Adams, a more conscious aesthetician, little germane to Job or to the humility of a Jewish lens-grinder, turned to the Virgin.

This is the sentimental nihilism Mr. More refers to. For some reason it does not follow that men are born of mothers. Mr. More who is bravely, sensitively, sensibly human forgets that he is also natural.

Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, who quotes Mary Lyon and Christ, forgets nothing of the kind. For does he not quote Meilhac and Halevy as well: "Le moraliste s'en afflige—il s'en afflige, le moraliste: mais c'est tout de meme comme ça." A Greek would have said, one who recognizes virtue is virtuous. Mr. Gamaliel Bradford is not a Greek. His essay is decidedly named an American Portrait.

For some reason, probably unknown to himself, Mr. Bradford reads Henry Adams to find Mr. Bradford. Does he meet with silence, he calls it wilful indifference. Is there an attempt, on the part of Adams, at elucidation, Mr. Bradford is ready to brand it as amused curiosity. His subject avoids fanaticism, and the judgment of the critic is, Adams lived in a religious void. Adams suffers unbearably, but Mr. Bradford is inclined to believe his subject's grief is "largely rhetorical: So long as ignorance enables him to gild a phrase or turn an epigram, he can forgive it."

"What shall be said of a man who in recounting his own life up to thirty, makes no single mention of having his pulses stirred, of being hurled out of himself by nature, or love, or

poetry, or God?" . . . "The poetry of the world might never have existed for all the account his education takes of it." These, among other things, are said of one who wrote: "As Adams sat there, numbers of people came, for the figure seemed to have become a tourist fashion, and all wanted to know its meaning. Most took it for a portrait-statue, and the remnant were vacant-minded in the absence of a personal guide. None felt what would have been a nursery-instinct to a Hindu baby or a Japanese jinricksha-runner. The only exceptions were the clergy, who taught a lesson even deeper. One after another brought companions there, and, apparently fascinated by their own reflection, broke out passionately against the expression they felt in the figure of despair, of atheism, of denial. Like the others, the priest saw only what he brought. Like all great artists, St. Gaudens held up the mirror and no more. The American laymen had lost sight of ideals; the American priest had lost sight of faith. Both were more American than the old, half-witted soldiers who denounced the wasting, on a mere grave, of money which should have been given for drink."

But for education, Adams "had no complaint to make against man or woman. They had all treated him kindly; he had never met with ill-will, ill-temper, or even ill-manners, or known a quarrel." Remembering these, his own, words and the occasional nephews he adopts as kin in his preface to "Mont Saint Michel and Chartres," still another one, at best belated, hurries to put an end to all eristics.

May 7, 1929

NOTE: The chronological method of this essay, as contrasted with other methods readers might prefer, i.e., Henry Adams on Unity and Multiplicity, on History, on Literature and Education, etc., etc., seeks justification in the fact that Adams' development as a writer reflects the process of education as he saw it in his autobiography.

The autobiographical matter of *The Education* has, therefore, been quoted thruout to offset the works as situations in "the process."

For the same reason, the autobiographical contents of *The Education* has not been used in the comment devoted to the book itself (see Chapter IX of this essay) except to make clear its relation to the "Mont Saint Michel and Chartres." These two works are so interrelated that an analysis of them, reflecting Adams' particular problem of education at the time he wrote them necessitated a combined handling of their themes, rather than a summary of their individual contents. Such a summary of the "Mont St. Michel" has been added as appendix for the reader who cares to turn to it. The contents of *The Education*, however, remains explained (but for a brief note) by the quotations from it, which are more than half this essay.

For the rest, these quotations assume that Adams' attainment or non-attainment to power (clarity as to the futility of education and as to the meaning of "something else") matters a great deal in relation to the treatment, which, as a writer, he gave these things.

The tragedy of his resignation grew with his literary accomplishment: but he was a writer from the beginning; bestowing on each of his problems detachment and imagination despite the void each problem left as he moved on from it. Detachment and imagination increased always with the growth in force and objectivity of his subject.

If, therefore, the reader will miss a criticism (implicit) of the quotations in this essay, he will perhaps excuse it on the ground that the matter checked obviousness.

August 14, 1929

Chapter I

Twenty (1860-65)

HENRY ADAMS lived long and wrote well. He began, when he was ten, by reading proof of his great-grandfather's *Works*. Whether the boy, plying his task at the biddance of his father, was led astray by the anti-slavery politics of four mature gentlemen, busy with him in the same room, can perhaps never be known. The merit of the boy's literary venture was an exception to the approaching rule. "In after years his father sometimes complained that, as a reader of Novanglus and Massachusettensis, Henry had shown very little consciousness of punctuation."

"His brothers were the type; he was the variation." The boy felt this instinctively. Detachment and the poet's receptivity for torment were part of him from the beginning. If Henry Adams had looked back and seen each incident in his life a parable of the Son forsaking the Mother to go about his Father's business, as in his "Prayer to the Virgin," he might have dwelt with less detachment than he did on his grandfather's act of leading the boy to school in spite of his desires.

The boy's body was a matter of sensitivity as all bodies are; his mind showed a lineage of worthies. It slaved over the works of John Adams because an Adams was his father and he, too, was an Adams. The tragedy was, here was a child, possessing the moral sensitivity of his fathers, and, no doubt, more serious than they; yet a child, whose clearness was not always in the possession of his moral sense, but in his enjoyments, his antics, his curiosity, his love of Scott, peaches and pears.

Yet the tragedy may be exaggerated. The boy's mind may have been led to school in tears, but the tears may have dried while the boy considered how funny the mind of his grandfather was. "On the whole," wrote Adams, "he learnt most then." The early life was happy. Any prosaic soul, like the boy's father, could have declaimed with tremulous voice Wordsworth's "Thou little Child — " over Henry, who might have heard and not felt profound melancholy or price, or even Henry Adams.

The boy went to Harvard when he was sixteen. "He took to the pen. He wrote. The College Magazine printed his work, and the College Societies listened to his addresses. Lavish of praise, the readers were not; the audiences, too, listened in silence; but this was all the encouragement any Harvard collegian had a reasonable hope to receive; grave silence was a

form of patience that meant possible future acceptance; and Henry Adams went on writing.

"No one cared enough to criticize, except himself who soon began to suffer from reaching his own limits. He found that he could not be this — or that — or the other; always precisely the things he wanted to be. He had not wit or scope or force. Judges always ranked him beneath a rival, if he had any; and he believed the judges were right. His work seemed to him thin, commonplace, feeble. At times he felt his own weakness so fatally that he could not go on; when he had nothing to say, he could not say it, and he found that he had very little to say at best. Much that he then wrote must be still in existence in print or manuscript, though he never cared to see it again; for he felt no doubt that it was in reality just what he thought it. At best it showed only a feeling for form; an instinct of exclusion. Nothing shocked — not even its weakness."[1]

Adams was timid, and timidity often breaks into astonishing temerity. His Class Oration of 1858 was delivered with perfect self-possession. Whatever detachment Adams then possessed must have appeared in his speech and in his delivery; whatever poetry he had must have been plain in his features to those who cared to see it, if any did. A photograph taken at this time remains. The face is too young for lines. But the boy is, twenty, revealed in the lips and eyes.

Henry had a high, straight forehead, as well, though education had not begun. He was human and wanted to go to Europe. In Germany, Lowell had taught him, there was scholarship; in Germany, Adams believed, young men learned Civil Law. In Thüringen "his three companions — John Bancroft, James J. Higginson, and B. W. Crowninshield, all

[1] *The Education*, p. 66. (See p. 2.)

Boston and Harvard College like himself, were satisfied with what they had seen, and when they sat down to rest on the spot where Goethe had written —

'Warte nur! balde
— Ruhest du auch!' —

the profoundness of the thought and the wisdom of the advice affected them so strongly that they hired a wagon and drove to Weimar the same night."[2] In Germany foreign students took notes. Adams left for Rome.

"Perhaps the most useful purpose he set himself to serve was that of his pen, for he wrote long letters, during the next three months, to his brother Charles, which his brother caused to be printed in the *Boston Courier*; and the exercise was good for him. He had little to say, and said it not very well, but that mattered less. The habit of expression leads to the search for something to express. Something remains as a residuum of the commonplace itself, if one strikes out every commonplace in the expression."[3]

"He went on to Naples, and there, in the hot June, heard rumors that Garibaldi and his thousand were about to attack Palermo. Calling on the American Minister, Chandler of Pennsylvania, he was kindly treated, not for his merit, but for his name, and Mr. Chandler amiably consented to send him to the seat of war as bearer of despatches to Captain Palmer of the American sloop of war *Iroquois*. Young Adams seized the chance, and went to Palermo in a government transport filled with fleas, commanded by a charming Prince Caracciolo.

"He told all about it to the *Boston Courier*, where the

[2] *The Education*, p. 82.

[3] *The Education*, p. 89.

narrative probably exists to this day, unless the files of the *Courier* have wholly perished."[4]

The files of the *Courier* are few. Of the seven letters of Adams to his brother Charles, the *American Historical Review* for January, 1920, reprinted those of July 10 and July 13, 1860. They show that Henry had no difficulty as a writer. He could be picturesque when he desired, and he desired to be frequently:

"I took a boat and landed. Numbers of men and boys, nearly all armed and looking very disreputable, were lounging and talking on the quay and round the Porta Felica. Here and there a red shirt showed itself. They make a very good uniform — rowdy but pugnacious; and now that Garibaldi has made them immortal, all young Sicily is putting them on, and swelling about in them almost as vulgarly, though more excusably, than New York firemen."

". . . we had a grand flea-hunt, for the beasts were all over us by dozens, and they were the biggest and hungriest specimens yet discovered. The *Illustrated News* correspondent, who was one of the party, is to make a sketch representing us dancing about and diving at each other's pantaloons. The officers' white duck showed the game beautifully, but our woolen ones only gave them shelter, and the consequence is that I am never free nor quiet, for my clothes bagged the most and concealed them the best."

He could express feeling that carried accents of restraint:

"It was curious to see that night, how people can sleep. At about midnight, after finishing supper and smoking, and while every one was looking up their berths, I went forward to see how the soldiers managed to get along. They were lying all

[4] *The Education*, p. 93.

over the deck, tumbled down anywhere, and all snoring like hogs. They lay so thick and it was so dark that I trod on three or four who were in the way, but they did not mind it, and when the engineer, who was passing, kicked them out of the passage, they dragged themselves a few inches on one side, with a groan, but never woke up."

He reflected on the humors of human nature, as a Fielding writing another *Journal of a Voyage* might have done:

"The next morning all was still, bright and clear. The poor soldiers' wives on deck looked very unhappy, and some, who had fine dark eyes, and pretty olive complexioned faces, looked so pale and patiently sad that they might have made beautiful studies for Magdalens and Madonnas. Certainly sea-sickness is one of the trials of life which bring us all down soonest to our common humanity; these women seemed absolutely refined by it, and their husbands and friends were as careful and gentle toward them as if they were all a set of refined and educated heroes and lovers."

Adams questioned early, in the manner of the "Education":

"And yet Heaven knows why he, of all men, has been selected for immortality. I, for one think that Cavour is much the greater man of the two; but practically the future Italy will probably adore Garibaldi's memory, and only respect Cavour's.

"As he (Garibaldi) sat there laughing and chattering and wagging his red gray beard, and puffing away at his cigar, it seemed to me that one might feel for him all the respect and admiration that his best friends ask, and yet at the same time enter a protest against fate."

Not many months passed before Henry Adams again wrote letters to his brother, Charles. As private secretary to his

father, to whom he referred as the "chief," and who was then ambassador to England, he observed British diplomacy, as he had observed Italian rebellion. The times were troubled ones for America; and news of the Union army in the States was not always assuring. Henry worried over the Declaration of Paris, and one thing or another, and London society was so monotonous at first that he longed for a commission and a chance to join Charles in the army. With time, however, he grew accustomed to his position, and, when opportunity offered, he wrote to Charles of other things than failure, British diplomacy and campaigns. He had really won his place in English society and seen Browning plain:

"Browning went on to get into a very unorthodox humor, and developed a spiritual election that would shock the Pope, I fear. According to him, the minds or the souls that really did develop themselves and educate themselves in life, could alone expect to enter a future career for which this life was a preparatory course. The rest were rejected, turned back, God knows what becomes of them, these myriads of savages and brutalized and degraded Christians. Only those that could pass the examination were allowed to commence the new career. This is Calvin's theory, modified; and really it seems not unlikely to me. Thus this earth may serve as a sort of feeder to the next world, as the lower and middle classes here do to the aristocracy, here and there furnishing a member to fill the gaps. The corollaries of this proposition are amusing to work out."[5]

Adams tried to work out many things. In the same year, 1863, he wrote:

"I write and read, and read and write. Two years ago I

[5] *A Cycle of Adams' Letters.* Vol. 2, p. 12.

began on history, our own time, I labored at financial theories, and branched out upon Political Economy and J. G. Mill. Mr. Mill's works, thoroughly studied, led me to the examination of philosophy and the great French thinkers of our own time; they in their turn passed me over to others whose very names are now known only as terms of reproach by the vulgar; the monarchist, Hobbes, the atheist Spinoza and so on. Where I shall end, dass weiss der liebe Gott! Probably my career will be brought up at the treadmill of the bar some day, for which, believe me, philosophy is as little adapted as war. Who will lead us back to the pleasant pastures and show us again the rich grain of the lawyer's office! Verily I say unto you, the time cometh and even now is when neither in these mountains nor in Jerusalem ye shall worship the idols of your childhood.

"Did you ever read Arthur Clough's Poems? The man that wrote that pastoral with the unpronounceable name, the Bothie of Toper-na-Vuolich. If you have not, I would like to send them to you. Young England, young Europe, of which I am by tastes and education a part; the young world, I believe, in every live country, are reflected in Clough's poems very clearly."[6]

However, youth had not yet broken with the child and was best reflected in his own words:

"The weeks dance away as merrily as ever they did in that dimly distant period when we were boys and you used to box my ears because your kite wouldn't fly and were the means of getting them boxed by disseminating at the tea-table truthless stories that I was painting myself a moustache with pear-juice — incidents of an early youth which you no doubt have forgotten, as I was the injured party, but which have re-

[6] *Adams' Letters.* Vol. 2, p. 95.

mained deeply rooted in my associations with an ancient green-room called the dining room in a certain house on a hill. At the present day, life is a pretty dull affair, but it passes quick enough. Still, before I die I would like to have one more good time such as I knew in former areas of the earth's history . . ."[7]

Chapter II

The North American Review (1857-1876)

HENRY ADAMS dearly loved to show facts bottoms up. This might be the key to all the essays which he published in the *North American*. His first contribution was made when Lowell was editor — an article which showed that John Smith was an excellent story-teller, but that Pocahontas never saved his head. Adams' researches, no doubt, stirred up a little revolution in history, but no school-teacher of his time ever heard of it, nor, judging from fact, has any guide of the young become edified since his time. The articles on "British Finance in 1816" and "The Bank of England" which followed "Captain John Smith," made the point that England as financier in the past was by no means infallible, and suggested that the States, during their straitened period of reconstruction, might take a hint from history.

Adams had, in fact, begun as antiquary. With his review of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* in 1868 he implied, to his friends around him, that he was ready to follow the current of his own time. Sir Charles gave Adams his field compass in token of his admiration. But already Henry's mind was admitting to himself that what attracted it was not evolution,

[7] *Adams' Letters.* Vol. 2, p. 19.

but change. Still Lyell's appreciation was not in vain: Adams had presented the geologist's views in orderly fashion, at great length, and with gusto surprising for a study in uniformity: "Sir Charles," he wrote, "wanders among the monotonous and flowerless forests of the coal-measures without saddening our spirits, and describes the enormous reptiles of the lias in language as calm and little sensational as though ichthyosauri were still gambolling in shoals along the banks of the Thames."

"These articles enrolled him on the permanent staff of the *North American Review*. Precisely what this rank was worth, no one could say; but, for fifty years the *North American Review* had been the stage coach which carried literary Bostonians to such distinction as they had achieved. Few writers had ideas which warranted thirty pages of development, but for such as thought they had, the *Review* alone offered space. An article was a small volume which required at least three months' work, and was paid, at best, five dollars a page. Not many men even in England or France could write a good thirty-page article, and practically no one in America read them; but a few score of people mostly in search of items to steal, ran over the pages to extract an idea or a fact, which was a sort of wild game — a blue fish or a teal — worth anything from fifty cents to five dollars. Newspaper writers had their eye on quarterly pickings. The circulation of the *Review* had never exceeded three or four hundred copies, and the *Review* had never paid its reasonable expenses. Yet it stood at the head of American literary periodicals; it was a source of suggestion to cheaper workers; it reached far into societies that never knew its existence; it was an organ worth playing on; and in the fancy of Henry Adams, it led, in some in-

distinct future, to playing on a New York daily newspaper."[8]

The *North American* led to nothing of the kind. Adams wrote his reviews of Grant's administration — several articles which ran under the name of "The Session" — his Civil Service Reform — all full facts, which were never popular, and brilliant with the spirit of reform. He criticized the administration so successfully that one of the "Sessions" was reprinted by the Democratic National Committee and circulated as a campaign document by the hundred thousand copies. Not even a Senator's insult of likening Adams to a begonia stopped Adams' political pyrotechnics. He criticized the legal tender act, and revealed the New York gold conspiracy of Jay Gould and James Fisk to the *Westminster Review*. The facts of the matter no longer interest anyone, except historians, but Adams' picture of the American Aladdin in his palace was a *tour de force*: "The atmosphere of the Erie offices was not supposed to be disturbed with moral prejudices; and as the opera itself supplied Mr. Fisk's mind with amusement, so the opera *troupe* supplied him with a permanent harem. Whatever Mr. Fisk did was done on an extraordinary scale."[9]

Henry might have continued in this gay manner, but his family interposed and decided that Harvard needed him in its folds again. "His function was not to be that of teacher, but that of editing the *Review* which was to be coupled with the professorship." Adams did not see much reason in changing his course of action; yet he joined Lowell as co-editor of the *Review* in October, 1870.

"The editor had barely time to edit; he had none to write. If copy fell short, he was obliged to scribble a book-review

[8] *The Education*, p. 234.

[9] *Chapters of Erie*, p. 107.

on the virtues of the Anglo-Saxons or the vices of the Popes; . . . for seven years he wrote nothing."[10]

Adams was far from kind to himself in *The Education*. The editorship of the *Review* was by no means a holiday, though it must have been a literary one. Without signing his name to his articles he reviewed every historian that came in the form of a book to his desk — Freeman, Stubbs, Kitchen, Parkman, Van Holst, Bancroft, Green; every work on early law and custom, whether Maine's, Sohm's or Coulange's. In the case of a work like Sohm's *Procedure de la lex Salica*, a foreign product, Adams translated liberally, to explain the author's position.

Occasionally Adams went out of his historical field to comment shortly on the *Saturday Review*. Or Clarke's *Building of a Brain* interested him enough to make him express an opinion which he made of in his *Education*: "In order that the family should exist at all, two individuals were necessary to it. And unless children are to be afterwards reared and educated like chickens in an Egyptian oven upon Phalansterian principles, it is impossible to escape division of labor as an inevitable sequence in their care and education. Female education must be moulded to meet this inevitable contingency, and in point of view, our female education, mental as well as physical, is often a lamentable failure."

Adams' literary holiday especially deserved its epithet when he reviewed Howells' "Wedding Journey," Palgrave's Poems and Tennyson's "Queen Mary." Noticing that Palgrave in his "Alcestis" subdued passion to rhetorical form, Adams ventured a comment which American "Classicists," past and present, must find disturbing: "Neither Euripides nor Sophocles would have cared to throw the treatment of 'Alcestis' into a

[10] *The Education*, p. 307.

mould which was difficult for their countrymen to appreciate, and if they had done so, the sense of effort would have taught them and their audience that they were following an unnatural process. And so with Mr. Palgrave and with all the other poets, great and small, who have imitated the Greeks; as studies, their work is no doubt not only valuable but necessary to high excellence; as poems one might almost say that the greater the success the greater is the failure: the closer the copy the more obvious is the *tour de force*."

On Tennyson, he was fifty years ahead of the sanest criticism of fifty years later. "If Queen Mary is, as has been said, not a subject for high tragical interest, it was for Mr. Tennyson to overcome that difficulty or abandon the subject. It must be acknowledged that the difficulty is not overcome. The drama embodies no profoundly tragical human interest or passion. The Queen Mary of this play is the Queen Mary of history, essentially prosiac even in her most exalted or depressed moments. Mr. Tennyson has added nothing to the thought, such as it was, that history furnished to him. He has not elevated it, he has not intensified it, he has not even suppressed the pettiness of it." Adams summed up his argument and found Tennyson not the master of thought the age cherished, but a master of form, a singer of Elizabethan delicacies:

> "Shame upon you, Robin
> Shame upon you now!
> Kiss me would you? with my hands
> Milking the cow?"

Adams stopped writing for the *Review* in 1876. The October number of that year contained an interesting publisher's notice:

"The editors of the *North American Review* having retired from its management on account of a difference of opinion with the proprietors as to the political character of this number, the proprietors, rather than cause an indefinite delay in publication have allowed the number to retain the form which had been given to it, without, however, committing the *Review* to the opinions expressed therein."

The editors who had resigned were Henry Adams and Henry Cabot Lodge.

Chapter III

Cambridge (1870-1877)

ADAMS found six years sufficient time to spend on the *North American*, and he left Harvard at the end of seven. A professor has literary duties, besides his boys, to take care of. Adams prepared himself for his definitive work on American history; he began with the remote past and delivered a lecture on the "Primitive Rights of Women," which he later revised and printed in a book of historical essays. The paper denied that Early Woman under Early Institutions had been a slave. As Adams revealed her she held a high place in primitive society; her attractive force and strength had made the family an institution. As early as 1876 he had found a theme which was to become a passion with him in after years.

On the whole, Harvard left little time for writing. Adams included one essay on Anglo-Saxon Law in a volume which he edited. The essay made a fine piece of exposition, a compact manual of English Law from the earliest times to Edward the Confessor. Adams amused himself with the discovery that his ancestors were sensible enough in legal pro-

cedure to accept "the informal decision of their friends."

He cited the names of German professors, intentionally, or unintentionally, but so graciously that they immediately became humorous: "Nevertheless, it must be conceded that, even here, Dr. Schmidt is, at least technically, correct." The essay gave the impression of precise phraseology and order of thought — two prerequisites not the least important for a poet; and of hidden paradox not in the least to be dispensed with by a wit.

"Documents Relating to New-England Federalism, 1800-1815" was Adams' final work at Harvard. Though the volume had no apparent controversial purpose — it was a work of pure editing, without any notes whatever — it did much to appraise the importance in American history of John Quincy Adams' "Reply to the Appeal of the Massachusetts Federalists" by publishing it.

There Adams' task at Harvard ended. He did not need to teach and edit, to live; and since he had married in 1872 and the society of Washington was more alluring than that of either Boston or Cambridge, he wrote an epitaph for the professor:

" Hic Jacet
Homunculus Scriptor
Doctor Barbaricus
Henricus Adams
Adae Filius Et Evae
Primo Explicuit
Socnam, "[11]

[11] *The Education*, p. 368.

Chapter IV

An American Plutarch (1879-1884)

IN Washington, with his work on American history during the times of Jefferson and Madison still in view, Adams pursued his researches diligently and invented prolifically. He edited three large volumes of Albert Gallatin's writings, and wrote a voluminous life of him; he wrote, also, a life of John Randolph; and, finally, an article, in French, which he later translated and reprinted, on Napoleon I at St. Domingo. Adams' French was perfectly clear as might have been expected, but the article said nothing of Napoleon and Toussaint l'Ouverture that he was not to repeat in a chapter of his *History*.

The contrast in style between the "Albert Gallatin" and the "John Randolph" was remarkable. The *Life of Gallatin* was more than half quotation; the writer's contributions to the study of the life were the barest facts, though these were many; there was no ornament; emotion was restrained; a very sedate man seemed to be back of all. *The Life of Randolph* quoted less; the facts were there, but fewer, and arranged for effect; emotion was more candid and often gave itself to rigorous judgment; a brilliant satire seemed to be the main intention.

In the *Gallatin* humor was often achieved by quotation, as from Voltaire's note to Gallatin's mother: "Vos figues, madame, sont un présent d'autant plus beau que nous pouvons dire comme l'autre: car ce n'était pas le temps des figues." In the *Randolph* humor served a direct purpose; the joke had to be on John Randolph; the effect was often wrenched through a mere juxtaposition of words — "Henceforward the

little Randolphs ran wild at Bizarre." These distinguishing qualities of the two lives were immediately apparent, though Adams may have had no contrast in mind.

It has been said that Adams shared a family prejudice towards John Randolph; and it was true that Henry Adams could never have been very sympathetic towards a professed *ami des noirs,* who kept slaves all his life. But this does not entirely account for the captious tone of the volume. For that matter, Federalism was also rooted in Adams' nature. He might have been as captious about Gallatin — secretary of the treasury under Jefferson.

Clearly, Adams had a rare type of mind. To him, a poet's religion remained apart from the expression of that religion, and the poet was criticized for the expression; again, a statesman's personal character, per se, was to be judged by the historian only as it affected his statesmanship. John Randolph, in private, might have been the Bacchus of Virginia; the historian necessarily gave not one thought to this side of the man. But when John Randolph, on the floor of the House, showed the statesmanship of a man on a drunken carousal, the historian had a serious reason for judgment. Adams, like the Hellenes, looked upon virtue not as goodness, but as virtuosity, the technical mastery of an art. Historians do not dispute the fact that Albert Gallatin's well-considered ideas on finance, his foreign predilection for saying things clearly, were superior to John Randolph's southern oratory. Adams' method and aim were especially clear in the last lines of each biography. This is the portrait of Gallatin: ". . . his life had left no traces to be erased, and his death would create no confusion and required no long or laborious forethought. He had felt a certain pride in his model means; his avowed principle

had been that a Secretary of the Treasury should not acquire wealth. He had no enemies to forgive." The last lines on Randolph are an immediate contrast: "Neither sickness nor suffering, however, is an excuse for habitual want of self-restraint. Myriads of other men have suffered as much without showing it in brutality or bitterness, and he himself never in his candid moments pretended to defend his errors: 'Time misspent, and faculties misemployed, and senses jaded by labor or impaired by excess, cannot be recalled.' "

As a historian Henry Adams was decidedly unbiased. That in private life he felt whoever thought in French to be clear, and, on the contrary, whatever walked in high boots and was lank, to be grotesque, was another matter.

LOUIS ZUKOFSKY

To Be Continued

CANTOS XXVIII, XXIX, XXX

XXVIII

And God the Father Eternal (Boja d'un Dio !)
Having made all things he cd. think of , felt yet
That something was lacking , and thought
Still more , and reflected that
The Romagnolo was lacking , and
Stamped with his foot in the mud and
Up comes the Romagnolo :
" Gard , yeh bloudy 'angman ! It's me . "

Aso iqa me. All Esimo Dottor Aldo Walluschnig
who with the force of his intellect
with art and assiduous care
has snatched from death by a most perilous operation
the classical Caesarean cut
Marotti , Virginia , in Senni of San Giorgio
at the same time saving her son.
May there move to his laud the applause of all men
and the gratitude of the family.
S.Giorgio, 23d May. A.D. 1925.

It is increasingly difficult to make the fragments of this long poem complete each in itself , and were they entirely so they wd. be wrong for their purpose as parts. I have no desire either for needless mystery or for writing equally needless explanations. In the case of the present three cantos , I believe the thoughtful reader, if he will take the risk of guessing their probable function in the poem as a whole , will probably guess right. If he is unwilling to hazard such guess he may as well go back and read Tennyson.

The two lines of provençal in Canto XXIX are from a poem of Sordello's.

Item : There are people that can swimme in the sea
havens and rivers naked
having bowes and shafts ,
coveting to draw nigh yr. shippe which if they find not
well watched and warded they wil assault
desirous of the bodies of men which they covet for meate,
if you resit them
they dive and wil flee.

And Mr Lourpee sat on the floor of the pension dining
room
Or perhaps it was in the alcove
And about him lay a great mass of pastells ,
That is , the stubbs and broken pencils of pastell,
In pale indeterminate colours.
And he admired the Sage of Concord
" Too broad ever to make up his mind "
And the mind of Lourpee at fifty
Directed him into a room with a certain vagueness
As if he wd. neither come in nor stay out
As if he wd. go neither to the left nor the right
And his painting reflected this habit.

And Mrs Kreffle's mind was made up ,
Perhaps by the pressure of circumstance ,
She described her splendid apartment
In Paris and left without paying her bill
And in fact she wrote later from Sevilla
And requested a shawl , and received it
From the Señora at 300 pesetas cost to the latter
(also without remitting) which
May have explained the lassitude of her daughter ;

And the best paid dramatic critic
Arrived from Manhattan
And was lodged in a bordello (promptly)
Having trusted " his people "
Who trusted a Dutch correspondent ,
And when they had been devoured by fleas
(critic and family)
They endeavoured to break the dutchman's month's contract ;
And the ladies from West Virginia
Preserved the natal aroma ,
And in the railway feeding-room in Chiasso
She sat as if waiting for the train for Topeka —
— That was the year of the strikes —
When we came up toward Chiasso
By the last on the narrow-gauge ,
Then by tramway from Como
Leaving the lady who loved bullfights
With her eight trunks and her captured hidalgo ,
And a dutchman was there who was going
To take the boat at Trieste ,
Sure , he was going to take it ;
Would he go round by Vienna ? He would not.
Absence of trains wdnt. stop him.
So we left him at last in Chiasso
Along with the old woman from Kansas ,
Solid Kansas , her daughter had married that Swiss
Who kept the buffet in Chiasso.
Did it shake her ? It did not shake her.
She sat there in the waiting room , solid Kansas ,
Stiff as a cigar-store indian from the Bowery
Such as one saw in "the nineties " ,

First sod of bleeding Kansas
That had produced this ligneous solidness .
If thou wilt go to Chiasso wilt find that indestructable
female
As if waiting for the train to Topeka
In the buffet of that station on the bench that
Follows the wall , to the right side as you enter.
And Clara Leonora wd. come puffing so that one
Cd. hear her when she reached the foot of the stairs ,
Squared , chunky , with her crooked steel spectacles
And her splutter and her face full of teeth
And old Rennert wd. sigh heavily
And look over the top of his lenses and
She wd. arrive after due interval with a pinwheel
Concerning Grillparzer or - pratzer
Or whatever follow the Grill- , and il Gran Maestro
Mr Liszt had come to the home of her parents
And taken her on his prevalent knee and
She held that a sonnet was a sonnet
And ought never be destroyed ,
And had taken a number of courses
And continued with hope of degrees and
Ended in a Baptist learnery
Somewhere near the Rio Grande.

And they wanted more from their women ,
Wanted 'em jacked up a little
And sent over for teachers (Ceylon)
So Loica went out and died there
After her time in the post-Ibsen movement.

One day in Smith's room
Or may be it was that 1908 medico's
Put the gob in the fire-place
Ole Byers and Feigenbaum and Joe Bromley ,
Joe hittin' the gob at 25 feet
Everytime , ping on the metal
(Az ole man Comley wd. say : Boys ! ..
Never cherr terbakker ! Hrwwkke tth !
Never cherr terbakker !)
" Missionaries , " said Joe , " I was out back of Jaffa ,
I dressed in the costume , used to like the cafés ,
All of us settin' there on the ground ,
Pokes his head in the doorway : " Iz there any "
He says " Gar'
Damn
Man here
Thet kan speak ENGLISH ? ! "
Nobody said anything fer a while
And then I said : " Hu er' you ? "
" I'm er misshernary I am "
He sez , " chucked off a naval boat in Shanghai .
I worked at it three months , nothin' to live on. "
Beat his way overland .
I never saw the twenty I lent him. "

Great moral secret service , plan , Tribune is told
limit number to thirty thousand ,
only highest type will be included ,
propaganda within ranks of the veterans
to keep within bounds when they come into
contact with personal liberty .... with the french
authorities

that includes the Paris police . . .
Strengthen franco-american amity.

NARCOTIC CHARGE : Frank Robert Iriquois
gave his home Oklahama City . . . Expelled July 24th.
" Je suis . . . .
(Across the bare planks of a diningroom in the Pyrenees)
. . . . plus fort que . .
. . le Boud-hah ! "
(No contradiction)
" Je suis . . . .
. . . . plus fort que le . .
. . Christ !
(No contradiction)
"J'aurai . .
aboli . .
le poids !"
(Silence , somewhat unconvinced.)
And in his waste house , detritus ,
As it were the cast buttons of splendours ,
The harbour of Martinique, drawn every house , and in
detail ,
Green shutters on half the houses ,
Half the thing still unpainted.
" . . . sont
" l'in. . fan. .terie KOH"
lon - i - al - e
voce tinnula
MAR-
vieux -ins ! "
" Ce sont les
-sou-

He made it , feitz Marcebrus , the words and the music ,
Uniform out for Peace Day
And that lie about the Tibetan temple
(happens by the way to be true ,
they do carry you upon their shoulders)
Bad for his medical practice.

"Retreat ? " said Dr Wymans , " It was marrvelous ,
Secret . Turks knew nothing about it . ...
Uh ! Helped me to get my wounded aboard. "
And that man sweat blood to get through that railway ,
And what he ever got out of it ?
And one day he drove down to the whorehouse
Cause all the farmers had consented
and granted the right of way ,
But the pornoboskos wdn't. have it at any price
And said he'd shoot the surveyors ,
But he didn't shoot ole pop in the buckboard ,
He giv him the right of way.
And they thought they had him flummox'd ,
Nobody'd sell any rails ;
Till he went up to the north of New York state
And found some there on the ground
And he had 'em pried loose and shipped 'em
And had 'em laid here through the forest .

Thing is to find something simple
As for example Pa Stadtvolk ;
Hooks to hang gutters on roofs ,
A spike and half-circle, patented 'em and then made 'em ;
Worth a good million , not a book in the place ;
Got a horse about twenty years after , seen him

CANTOS XXVIII, XXIX, XXX

Of a Saturday afternoon
When they'd taken down an old fence ,
Ole Pa out there knockin the nails out
(To *save* 'em) I hear he smoked good cigars.
And when the Prince Oltrepassimo died , saccone ,
That follow the coffins ,
He lay there on the floor of the chapel
On a great piece of patterned brocade
And the walls solid gold about him
And there was a hole in one of his socks
And the place open that day to the public ,
Kids running in from the street
And a cat there licking himself
And then stepped over the Principe ,
Discobolus upstairs and the main door
Not opened since '70
When the Pope shut himself into the Vatican
And they had scales on the table
To weigh out the food on fast days ;
And he lay there with his hood back
And the hole in one of his socks.

" Buk ! " said the Second Baronet, " eh . . .
" Thass a funny lookin' buk " said the Baronet
Looking at Bayle , folio , 4 vols; in gilt leather , " Ah . . .
" Wu . . Wu . . wot you goin' eh to do with ah . .
" . . ah read-it ? "
Sic loquitur eques.

And lest it pass with the day's news
Thrown out with the daily paper ,
Neither official pet

Nor Levine with the lucky button
Went on into darkness
Saw naught above but close dark ,
Weight of ice on the fuselage
Borne into the tempest , black cloud wrapping their
wings ,
The night hollow beneath them
And fell with dawn into ocean
But for the night saw neither sky nor ocean
And found ship ... why ? .... how ? ... by the
Azores.
And she was a bathing beauty ; Miss Arkansas or Texas
And the man quasi anonymous
Neither a placard for non-smokers or non-alcohol
Nor for the code of Peoria ;
Or one-eyed Hinchcliffe and Elsie
Blackeyed bitch that married dear Dennis ,
That flew out into nothingness
And her father was the son of one too
That got the annulment.

XXIX

Pearl , great sphere , and hollow ,
Mist over lake , full of sunlight ,
Pernella concubina
The sleeve green and shot gold over her hand
Wishing her son to inherit
Expecting the heir ainé be killed in battle
He being courageous , poisoned his brother puiné
Laying blame on Siena
And this she did by a page
Bringing war once more on Pittigliano
And the page repented and told this
To Nicolo (ainé) Pittigliano
Who won back that rock from his father
"still doting on Pernella his concubine "
The sand that night like a seal's back
Glossy beneath the lanthorns.
From the Via Sacra
(fleeing what band of Tritons)
Up to the open air
Over that mound of the hippodrome :
Liberans et vinculo ab omni liberatos
As who with four hands at the cross roads
By king's hand or sacerdos'
are given their fredom
— Save who were at Castra San Zeno .....
Cunizza for God's love , for remitting the soul of her father
— May hell take the traitors of Zeno .

And fifth begat he Alberic
And sixth the Lady Cunizza .
In the house of the Cavalcanti
anno 1265
Free go they all as by full manumission
All serfs of Eccelin my father da Romano
Save those who were with Alberic at Castra San Zeno
and let them go also
With hell's devils in soul and in body .
And sixth the Lady Cunizza
That was given first to Richard St Boniface
And Sordello subtracted her from that husband
And lay with her in Tarviso
Till he was driven out of Tarviso
And she left with a soldier named Bonius
nimium amorata in eum
And went from one place to another
" The light of this star o'ercame me "
Running up the most awful bills .
And this Bonius was killed on a sunday
and she had then a Lord from Braganza
and then a house in Verona .

Looked from the planks to heaven ,
Said Juventus : " Immortal ...
He said : " Ten thousand years before now ...
Or he said : " Passing into the point of the cone" ,
Begin by making the replica .
Thus Lusty Juventus , in September ,
In cool air , under sky ,
Before the residence of the funeral director
Whose daughter's conduct caused comment.

But the old man did not know how he felt
Nor cd. remember what prompted the utterance .
He said : " What I know , I have known ,
" How can the knowing cease knowing ? " .

By the lawn of the senior elder
He continued his ambulation :
" Matter is the lightest of all things ,
" Chaff , rolled into balls , tossed , whirled in the aether ,
" Undoubtedly crushed by the weight .
" Light also proceeds from the eye ;
" In the globe over my head
" Twenty feet in diameter , thirty feet in diameter
— Glassy , the glaring surface —
" There are many reflections
" So that one may watch them turning and moving
" With heads down now , and now up .

He went on toward the amateur student of minerals
That later went bankrupt ;
He went on past the house of the local funny man ,
Jo Tyson that had a camera . His daughter was bow-legged
And married the assembly-man's son.
O-hon dit que'ke fois au vi'age ....

Past the house of the three retired clergymen
Who were too cultured to keep their jobs .
Langour has cried unto langour
about the marshmallow-roast
(Let us speak of the osmosis of persons)
The wail of the phonograph has penetrated their marrow
(Let us ....

The cicadas continue uninterrupted.
With a vain emptiness the virgins return to their homes
With a vain exasperation
The ephebe has gone back to his dwelling
The djassban has hammered and hammered
The gentleman of fifty has reflected
That it is perhaps just as well .
Let things remain as they are.

The mythological exterior lies on the moss in the forest
And questions him about Darwin .
And with a burning fire of phantasy
he replies with " Deh ! nuovoletta .....
So that she would regret his departure.
Drift of weed in the bay
She seeking a guide , a mentor ,
He aspires to a career with honour
To step in the tracks of his elders ;
a greater incomprehension ?
There is no greater incomprehension
Than between the young and the young .
The young seek comprehension ;
The middleaged to fulfill their desire .

Sea weed dried now , and now floated ,
mind drifts , weed , slow youth , drifts ,
Stretched on the rock , bleached and now floated ;
Wein , Weib , TAN AOIDAN
Chiefest of these the second , the female
Is an element , the female
Is a chaos
An octopus

A biological process
and we seek to fulfill ....
TAN AOIDAN , our desire , drift ....
Ailas e que'm fau miey huelh
Quar no vezon so qu'ieu vuelh .
Our mulberry leaf , woman , TAN AOIDAN ,
" Nel ventre tuo , o nella mente mia ,
" Yes, Milady , precisely, if you wd. have anything
properly made. "

" Faziamo tutte le due ...
" No not in the palm-room . The lady says it is
Too cold in the palm-room. Des Valeurs ,
Nom de Dieu , et
encore des valeurs.
She is submarine , she is an octopus , she is
A biological process ,
So Arnaut turned there
Above him the wave pattern cut in the stone
Spire-top alevel the well-curb
And the tower with cut stone above that , saying :
" I am afraid of the life after death . "
and after a pause :
" Now , at last , I have shocked him. "
And another day or evening toward sundown by the arena
(les gradins)
A little lace at the wrist
And not very clean lace either ....
And I , " But this beats me ,
" Beats me , I mean that I do not understand it ,
" This love of death that is in them.
Let us consider the osmosis of persons

nondum orto jubare ;
The tower , ivory ; the clear sky ,
Ivory rigid in sunlight
And the pale clear of the heaven
Phoibos of narrow thighs ,
The cut cool of the air ,
Blossom cut on the wind , by Helios
Lord of the Light's edge , an April
Blown round the feet of the God.
Beauty on an ass-cart
Sitting on five sacks of laundry
That wd. have been the road by Perugia
That leads out to San Piero . Eyes brown topaz
Brookwater over brown sand ,
The white hounds on the slope ,
Glide of water ; lights and the prore
Silver beaks out of night
Stone , bough over bough ,
lamps fluid in water
Pine by the black trunk of its shadow
And on hill, black trunks of the shadow ,
The trees melted in air.

XXX

Compleynt , compleynt I hearde upon a day ,
Artemis singing , Artemis , Artemis
Agaynst Pity lifted her wail :
Pity causeth the forests to fail ,
Pity slayeth my nymphs .
Pity spareth so many an evil thing ,
Pity befouleth April ,
Pity is the root and the spring .
Now if no fayre creature followeth me
It is on account of Pity ,
It is on account that Pity forbideth them slaye .
All things are made foul in this season ,
This is the reason , none may seek purity
Having for foulnesse pity
And things growne awry ;
No more do my shaftes fly
To slay . Nothing is now clean slayne
But rotteth away.

In Paphos , on a day
I also heard :
..... goeth not with young Mars to playe
But she hath pity on a doddering fool ,
She tendeth his fyre ,
She keepeth his embers warm .
Time is the evil . Evil .
A day , and a day
Walked the young Pedro baffled ,
a day and a day
After Ignez was murdered .

Came the Lords in Lisboa
a day, and a day
In homage. Seated there
dead eyes,
Dead hair under the crown,
The King still young there beside her.

Came Madame ὕΛΗ ὕλη
Clothed with the light of the altar
And with the price of the candles.
"Honour? Balls for yr. honour!
Take two million and swallow it."
Is come Messire Alfonso {Alfonso I d'Este
And is departed by boat for Ferrara
And has passed here without saying "O."

Whence have we carved it in metal
Here working in Caesar's fane:
To the Prince Caesare Borgia
Duke of Valent and Aemelia
... and here have I brought cutters of letters
and printers not vile and vulgar
(in Fano Caesaris)
notable and sufficient compositors
and a die-cutter for greek fonts and hebrew
named Messire Francesco da Bologna
not only of the usual types but he hath excogitatëd
a new form called cursive or chancellry letters
nor was it Aldous nor any other but it was
this Messire Francesco who hath cut all Aldous his letters
with such grace and charm as is known

Hieronymous Soncinus
7th July 1503
and as for text we have taken it
from that of Messire Laurentius
and from a codex once of the Lords Malatesta ....
And in August that year died Pope Alessandro Borgia ,
Il Papa morì .

explicit
canto
XXX.

EZRA POUND

NINTH DECLAMATION

HOW — did I not expend great thought upon the moulding of my career to trivial forms? Did I not vote for quietude though procured at the price of ill-humour and underlying envy? I was set for humbleness, adjusting both my mind and my economy to negative living.

Where is the point whereat resistances, coming upon us from without, cease to be obstacles and emerge as guidance? Are there events which one can look upon, not as accident, but as grave intervention; are there changes unforeseen which transcend the fortuitous to become signallings? Already the things I move among are left behind me, and the familiar is vested with an unclean strangeness. "By what checks could you contrive to remain here?" I have asked myself, watching both wife and children unhappily, as though there were an unquestionable cause for my departure, known and accepted by us all, as though I were called away to defend them. These tender fellows — I believe there is much in which I could instruct them subsequently. Am I permitted to make them of this seed, yet deny them my study of its correctives? Am I not, of all men, obliged to school them in their disease? "By what elation," I have also asked myself, "could you consider their abandonment?" — and entranced by my own thoughts, picturing my farewell even as I sat surrounded, I felt the encouragement of this woman's pitying eyes. My features, I understood, had shown pain; and I was chagrined at her kindliness, all the more poignant because misplaced. Did she assume that a headache such as had attacked me frequently

in recent months was now upon me? Unwittingly she was rebuking with her solicitations. Though fearing that I might in sleep or delirium speak to wound her, and though trying to imagine some way whereby I could be assured of not doing so, I know that I have daily offered her dismaying evidence of my unrest.

Shall I, after planning, entrust my future to the flipping of a coin? Shall I pluck a flower, and remove its petals in succession, saying, "I leave, I remain," alternately? Ah, should the command by hazard decree my staying, I fear that I should pluck another flower, in turn despoiling it of petals, but thus revising my formula: "Obey, or do not obey, the first."

See what I had done in my manner of bargaining. How I had come here, wounded, and been restored by Genevieve. How I had married here, become the father of two children, and erected a structure of citizenship within the understanding of my neighbours — healing myself first by clandestine love, which was dismissed, and thence by some prosperity. Until persons sought assistance, which I found no cause for refusing them, so that a further share of good repute was engrafted upon me. And but for the deeper protests of the spirit, in this too there was a healing.

Was there not final surrender, coming with my consent to write for local purposes, a play for the students of the village? A nearby town, smaller than our own, formed the soundest butt for my shameless humour, as the audience was already pledged to laughter by the subject. And there were certain small politicians, ingloriously routed in the last election, whom it was safe to ridicule. I had known a gentle-minded person who was content to do the bidding of others, but would confront a blizzard at midnight to make certain that his livestock was in comfort. I had wished him all wealth

and happiness, but even prior to the growth of his deafness he was silent to the verge of ignorance. I could readily give him nobility in this play. Thus gambling with loaded dice I was assured of my dingy winnings. Thence to a partial office in the school — and thereupon, by resignment too deep for irony, my participating in the cultural improvement of my neighbours. (May these blunt materials in this concatenation trace a more significant destiny. Oh, vague stirrings at the embarrassed crackling of the knuckles at handshake, for her fingers had been relaxed by travel. Oh, glorious termination of a blind pilgrimage!) If one, in fleeing, takes the piloting of his life into his own hands; if each modicum of his defense is the reward of plotting; if he digs in a secret hole and buries there at midnight the small coins of his imperfect happiness; and if in a new event, unthought of, he finds the intrusion of other agencies, dare he not hold that a gentler existence has sought him out? This they shall not take from me. I have considered them one by one, asking: is he the man by whom I could be constrained in the interests of approval — and I have seen that to a *consensus omnium*, as thus analyzed, I was almost wholly insensitive.

Commanders, gamblers, and the adventurous, through dealing with alternatives, are led by arbitrary casualties to believe in the coercion of fate and to imagine exceptional purposes whereby their day depends upon the ritual tying of a shoe lace. To feel hazard as an entity, bearing upon oneself, one need but perceive the consistent arise for a time out of the uncertain. A storm blowing steadily against the bended body seems animate and invites a personal defiance which points beyond our reason. Hear how I have been led — see how I was made ready — as though for my rescue a papal staff had sprouted.

As we stood in the valley looking down upon the trim grain fields, there was great comfort in the displaying of my acreage. "And the herd?" Florence asked me, "the herd also is yours?" "The herd also," I answered, though this was not exact, for some of the cattle had been sold recently and not yet delivered. But the herd looked smaller from our great height, and my reply was for their proper number as they would have seemed had we been closer.

Let us lie, cheat, dissemble, beg connivance of any, forestall their anger by feigned cordiality should they come to accuse us, ask them kind questions to make their indignation more difficult, praise their despicable children to disarm them; let us cajole, simper, brush hypothetical dust-spots from their sleeves; let us admit all manner of compromise to avoid their forcing of an issue. But should they force an issue I will meet it. They will find such refusal to relinquish, such growling over a bone, as will recall portions of their lives long since stifled, and make them go from me with a double hatred. How ask that one return to his dungeon after assuagement? "Do you remember, Florence . . ." I have said to her, thereupon sharing some harmless restoration of our past. Oh, Anthony, this day I confessed how I once spied upon her to learn whether in all ways she was loyal to you — and this remembrance was a source of amusement to us.

"Hubert!" I exclaimed at her mention of him; "I had forgotten Hubert!" And were he here I could have embraced him, though he would have poisoned me for my words. For he had given more thought to making himself unforgettable than ever a Roman gave to fame. I pictured him again, racing in terror from a cow — surely a rabid beast, Anthony, for she came towards us with low-hanging udders, and mooing to be milked. The presence of the herd below doubtless suggest-

ed this preposterous incident to me. We reconstructed Hubert, who could not share a confidence without fearing that it would be abused, but despite such misgivings could not remain silent. We rehearsed his passion for the worst newspapers and the best literature. His militant fastidiousness, as he quarreled scrupulously with every servant, discharging his valets for failing to remind him always of what he could never once remind himself. His horror of noises. "Hear it, hear it!" he shrieked, as we were all walking on the beach at night. We fell silent, listening with bowed heads so that the wavelets, working among the pebbles, became intimate. And from far off came the faint, almost purring sound of a motor. "Like a trombone at your shoulder," his sister said quickly, for she knew what was expected of us. "Where shall we turn next!" and Hubert was audibly desolate. Florence recalled his helping her through puddled streets, in his politeness growing petulant when, owing to ineptitude on her part, he could not accommodate her quickly enough. "Yet there was another Hubert," I admonished her, the Hubert who sailed his yachts in the gale, tacking at fiendish angles, panting from elation and physical strain, and howling lines from Beowulf above the storm. There were two Huberts, a land-Hubert and a sea-Hubert. And how different they both were from his crony, whom we also met here, with the sorrowing face of a hound, the victim of his gullet, sighing from the effects of his last meal, showing the reliques of some past sensitivity now reduced to appetite — gentle when not morose from his burden — and peacefully accepting his daily martyrdom of omelettes and pork as he hastened to his grave. Parts of him drooped upon other parts, as though a body's flesh were held firm by cords and all the cords of his body had been severed.

Even with much greater likelihood of an existence after

death, how could mankind shape its course by any other slogan than that of our glorious presence? To move vigorously through chill water, and thereupon stretch like a snake in the sun — to do this actually, and to make the subtler pleasures of our living similar — surely this is the very core of gratitude to Makers. If I built a house I should ask to see that house stand self-assertively, at peace with its placing. Let us then be as though builded. Let man take each brilliant day as one dropped from an eternity of silence. Let him enjoy the unique organization of his hulk. Let him be rained upon, wind driven, sunned, firm-footed — living first among the elements, and shaping other experiences by this immediacy. Surely no flower protests at withering in the autumn; even subsidence can be a purpose — and days of gentle ecstasy can bring us to welcoming our decline. Henceforth I will look upon no man with envy who can but repeat in his terms what I have discovered in my own. Nature has become the carpet of our sportiveness; each surrounding object ministers with appropriate aid. Here is a skilful seller, recommending under many guises, repeating in the sound of birds what is suggested by stirrings of the air, maintaining by sunlight what is likewise proposed as the smell of damp soil, cradling the eye by the forms of a hill to make equivalence for the rushing of water. True, there are frogs, young and incautious, which land betimes in the belly of a heron. The heron's song is not their song. There are the sacrificed — there are those for whom the world was not created, but lo! I am not one of them. Here is a miracle prior to the embellishments of legend; here is a present wonder. For long I have hunted — and now I am feeding. Perhaps I am content.

Those who are to drudge beneath the earth, in the mines, the sewers, the stench of tunnels — let them be bred as other

than mankind, give thought to the monstrous preparing of their characters as to their sinews. Teach them that alleviation is neither possible nor to be desired, instruct them in hog-like appetites, nurture their brutality as we encourage in others affection. Do them at least this minimum of justice. Study them that their denigration may be thorough. Guide them downwards, by this sinister aruspicy, this prognostication by inspection of the entrails.

By its very thoroughness my exile had unmade itself. Learning that a company of actors in bad circumstances was touring the adjacent counties, I brought *The Merchant of Venice* to this village. Upon the troup's arrival I noted with relief that Portia was beautiful, and immediately thereafter saw that she was Florence.

Often in these years I have climbed the hill on which we now stood, crossed the blunt, timbered ridge, and wound by a briary road into the next valley. Here are the ruins of an old house, among deserted meadows, the rim of hills making it a separate world. It is a lonely spot, where in summer the trout stream sinks beneath the pebbles. I have gone through the littered rooms, opened musty cupboards, and rummaged among old rags with the rung of a broken chair. I have examined this decrepit house, waiting — and into its dismalness I now guided Florence, that her bright curiosity might give it different echoes. Leaning in the doorway, looking down upon the rotted flooring of the porch, we talked with some gravity. "For every man," I told her, "there must be something towards which he would make his way across dead bodies." And cautiously, never without obliqueness, we discussed our feelings towards each other.

KENNETH BURKE

BARBADOS

There were ants in the food
and scorpians about the bed
when he lay sick in Barbados.

take one pill each hour
and look out at the field of grass
in the sunlight and fresh wind.

the streets of the town are white
and the buildings a white glare—
"Evangeline" is on the shelves
of the hospital library.

On the boat the Doctor looks at the stars
he turns a card-board chart
and puts a pin in labeled Mars
he wears a white coat
and talks of elephants he's seen in India.

take one pill each hour

that stretch of cliff with sea-gulls
and harsh sand
the story of the haunted churchyard
and the pirate's tower
the sun-set and the star-map on the ocean—

emotion recollected in tranquillity.

WILLIAM BRENTON

GOD IS MAMMON

I

THE Editors of The Hound & Horn have invited me to compare in these pages some representative expression of current American views with a similar expression of French views. The invitation results to some extent, I imagine, from that American respect for France and things French which was once manifested in the framing of the Constitution of the United States and the designing of the City of Washington. But if this respect has lasted from those days, it has long ceased to be effective. When, for instance, a Brownell returns from a few years' stay in Paris and proclaims that "they order this matter better in France," he receives scant attention. That is to say, American admiration of France, once almost a cult, is now no more than an agreeable sentimentality. Its present quality may be apprehended by reflecting that if, on the one hand, the report that Mr. Sherwood Anderson, on finding himself for the first time alighting from a train at the Gare du Nord, burst into tears, is credible enough, the assertion that Mr. Theodore Dreiser has been influenced by Balzac is, on the other hand, passing strange.

If, however, Columbia rose long ago from sitting at the Gallic knee and went her own way, retaining of her former tutelage only a fond memory, one cannot be again in France, as I have recently been, after some years spent in the United States, without being struck by the extent to which the French have of late taken to emulating America. It is not so much

that the French are following in America's footsteps, as the result of deliberate study of American thought and methods, although, for instance, already before the War the name of William James ranked with the French very high indeed, and the best study of contemporary American industry is, so I understand, the work of two Frenchmen. It is rather that the orientation which the French have come to give to their activities leads them to adopt views and ways which are American by origin and which have, already for generations, set the trend of the American effort.

I lack space for more than one example. A leading Parisian publisher, Mr. Bernard Grasset, has been professing in a book, *La Chose Littéraire,* his business faith. For a Frenchman to succeed today as a publisher, he must, Mr. Grasset asserts, have a taste for persuasion. A publishing reputation now depends on the steady discovery of interesting and exciting new books to publish, and also, and just as much, on the imposition of the discoveries on the public. For the buying of books has, he points out, greatly increased in France since the War. A new reading public has arisen, and it is eager rather than discriminating. To guide this public as to what it shall read has accordingly become for the French publisher a duty. At the same time Mr. Grasset feels, he says, that when he obtains from an author a licence to publish one of that author's works, he is thereby integrating in a way the book in himself. He is adding to that of himself which may be immortal. For all creators aspire, he declares, to immortality. Of such aspirations the publisher's is, however, the most modest, the one there is the least shame in avowing. For an author, however great, to announce that his work is going to survive him for centuries is preposterous. But a publisher who has had a share in the important book-production of an age may quite legit-

imately claim that his name will be uttered in the very remote future.

Thus, according to Mr. Grasset, the French publisher is no longer content today to be a mere speculative tradesman. He sets up, on the one hand, to be the reading public's mentor, and, on the other hand, to be, quite as much as any of his authors, a creator, and a creator, moreover, whose prospects are greater than theirs of immortality.

This is precisely the American publisher's attitude to his business. What has hitherto distinguished American business-men from business-men of other nationalities is that American business-men are not satisfied with pursuing the greatest possible volume of trade. They insist also on pretending that that natural, if sordid, pursuit is really the pursuit of an ideal. Their pretense is typified by their incessant babbling about "Service!" In that the American publisher is no exception. It is not enough for him that he should sell books. He has to maintain, further, that the books are good books, and that the public must buy them because he says that they are good, and he knows. His pretensions to critical authority have been so successful that I have myself seen the editor of a literary weekly visit a publisher in order to learn from him how to review a novel which the publisher was bringing out. The visit was in no way inspired by the advertisement manager; it was made in a spirit of simple inquiry. Also, of course, the American publisher poses as a creator. I used to wonder how on earth a publisher could be a creator, so when the wife of a leading New York publisher told me one day that her husband was creative, I ventured to ask in what way. "Sure, Joe is creative," she promptly replied; "why, he always gets the better of a bargain!"

But, as Mr. Grasset's book shows, the American business-

man's peculiarity of claiming to be, in his pursuit of profits, the executor of an ideal, the public's devoted ministrant, is his no longer. French publishers have, according to Mr. Grasset, been converted to the American publishers' outlook, and as with publishing, so, it could be shown, with other forms of French commercial enterprise. Today France, and indeed the whole of Europe, is adopting the American attitude to life. Today it is eastward, not westward, the course of empire takes its way.

That being so, it seemed to me, as in Paris I considered THE HOUND & HORN's invitation, that I should not be able, as requested, to compare some expression of current American views with a similar expression of French views, but should find myself led, when I came to pick upon two books for comparison, to do the opposite, to compare some expression of current French views with a similar expression of American views.

II

And this is what has happened. The two books I propose to compare are a little essay by the distinguished French novelist, Mr. François Mauriac,[1] and a rather large essay by Mr. Walter Lippmann.[2]

Mr. Mauriac having produced a short biography of Racine, Mr. André Gide wrote to him as follows:

> Vous vous félicitez que Dieu, avant de ressaisir Racine, lui ait laissé le temps d'écrire ses pièces, de les écrire *malgré* sa conversion. En somme, ce que vous voulez, c'est la permission d'écrire *Destins* [one of Mr. Mauriac's latest novels]; la permission d'être chrétien sans avoir à brûler vos livres; et c'est ce qui vous les fait écrire de telle

[1] *Dieu et Mammon.* Avec une étude de Ramon Fernandez. Edition limited to 5,000 copies (Paris: Le Capitole).

[2] *A Preface to Morals* (New York: The Macmillan Company).

sorte que, bien que chrétien, vous n'ayez pas à les désavouer. Tout cela (ce compromis rassurant qui permette d'aimer Dieu sans perdre de vue Mammon), tout cela nous vaut cette conscience angoissée qui donne tant d'attrait à votre visage, tant de saveur à vos écrits, et doit tant plaire à ceux qui, tout en abhorrant le péché, seraient bien désolés de n'avoir plus à s'occuper du péché.

The little essay is Mr. Mauriac's reply to this charge.

To write is, he says, to yield oneself. The reader nowadays makes that evident enough, for the reader seeks the writer within the writer's work in order to learn from the writer's kinship with himself what should be his own attitude to life. But having thus surrendered himself, the writer finds that hostile criticism compels him to confront his own conception of what he is with the reflection he produces in the hostile intelligence. That is what Mr. Gide's charge leads him himself to do. Is he, he asks himself, what Mr. Gide says he is?

Mr. Mauriac was, he goes on to say, born a Catholic. He could never become anything else. Yet at twenty he realized that he was as passionate as any other fellow of the same age. Nature was, he noticed, slowly gaining on Grace. He felt that he must either yield to God or to the nether power. He could not adapt Christianity to his passions. So there seemed to be only one course open: to launch himself into writing, to express, render sensible, the monster he could not overcome. Thereupon, he was faced with another dilemma: on the one hand, artistic disinterestedness; on the other, what he called the apostles' sense of purpose. Even then, however, he never dreamed of escaping from the Catholic fold. But if he has remained a Catholic, it is in spite of himself. That is what must be understood. And that being so, there can, he says, be no question of a reassuring compromise enabling him to love God without losing sight of Mammon. Of course one

cannot serve two masters, but in forsaking one for the other, he has continued to be reminded of the Forsaken One's power over him. His most spontaneous writings must bear a certain impress.

Why should it not be realized, he asks, that a man may be the prisoner of a metaphysic with which, mind and body, he disagrees? And that if such a wretch is lucky enough to own some facility of expression, his writing will occupy him and aid him in the untangling of his life? He will convince himself that what an artist needs essentially is something special to say, that an artist must express his personal drama. He will not want to die without leaving behind the written, definite expression of that drama, of that vision he has of the world and of its beings.

Mr. Mauriac understands, he continues, that imaginative writing has no value unless it apprehends the living man. To him the falsification of life is repugnant. But he is also aware that what he writes may have incalculable consequences. For imaginative writing is, after all, the depicting of the passions. So a Racine comes to give it up. Few writers, however, are equal to such a renunciation. Indeed, no human force can reduce a writer in his fruitful period to silence, and Mr. Mauriac knows of no instance in which even God's Grace has done so. A true writer must write, unless he has nothing left to say. But why? No doubt in order to break out of his own solitude, to enter into communion with other beings by inflecting their lives. A writer can, however, influence his fellows only if he is sincere, if he portrays life exactly as it is, and never distorts it for the sake of proving or demonstrating. Admittedly such disinterestedness may expose his readers to risks. Yet it remains that those of Mr. Mauriac's novels which have seemed most daring to certain people are, he says, the

very novels which have influenced other souls most powerfully in a religious direction.

Thus does Mr. Mauriac defend himself against Mr. Gide. Now consider Mr. Lippmann. He has not to defend himself. He has written his essay because he feels that the world needs a new faith. He begins by pointing out that "the acids of modernity" have dissolved what he calls "the ancestral order." The religion which guaranteed to our fathers an order of the universe has become incredible. Our very disposition to believe has gone. We are disillusioned not only with that against which we have rebelled, but also with our rebellion. At the same time many of us feel "that there is a vacancy" in our lives, and even the most placid of us cannot be wholly at peace. The acids of modernity have not dissolved the needs which the great fictions fulfilled. In vain have we sought to satisfy those needs afresh by turning art or science into a religion. There is anarchy in our hearts. How is it to be appeased? Mr. Lippmann answers that when men can no longer believe that they are governed from heaven, they must find ways of governing themselves. When men can no longer be theists, they must, if they are civilized, become humanists.

The humanistic view rests, he continues, on human psychology and an interpretation of human experience. We have a kind of dim memory of a Golden Age: it is a deep conviction that happiness is attainable. Can we attain it, however, by blindly pursuing our desires, or must we adapt our desires to the world? All the books of wisdom agree that man's first task must be to reconstruct himself. They dwell on renunciation. This may mean the utter refusal to satisfy our desires. But that form of renunciation quickly fails. Impulses are not suppressed by being thwarted, and a period of self-denial comes to be followed by a period of self-indulgence. Proper

renunciation consists in satisfying our desires, but in satisfying them harmoniously. This kind of renunciation is the fruit of growth, a growth that is possible to the individual during his life. The history of each soul can be conceived as a progress from infantilism to maturity. That a man has become mature will then mean that he has reached a stage of development at which he no longer expects the world to adapt itself to his wishes, but spontaneously adjusts his wishes to the world. An individual life should be regarded as a gradual process of such harmonious adjustment of desires to the objects of desire. That is, Mr. Lippmann believes, the matrix of humanism. In such a conception is to be found, he suggests, the modern substitute for that conception of divine government which dominated the now vanished theocratic culture.

The conception of human nature as developing behaviour is accepted by all modern psychologists. That is to say, modern psychology confirms the insight of the sages as to how man can find peace and happiness — in a form of renunciation. We can still believe such religious teachers as Aristotle, the author of the Fourth Gospel, Buddha, and Spinoza, because in their teaching the theocratic principle is irrelevant. Quite independently of that principle, they emphasize the need for the education and conversion of the human will. Taken in this way, religion is found to have escaped dissolution by the acids of modernity. We can still believe, because we can understand, that if we are to solve our perplexities, it must be by growing disinterested.

Moreover, the ideal of disinterestedness is, Mr. Lippmann believes, inherent and inevitable in the modern world. In three great phases of human interest, in business, in government, and in sexual relations, he finds the ideal to be now implicit and necessary. What dominates modern business is

its impersonality. Business naturally tends to socialize itself: *laissez-faire* has gone. Corporations become so vast that those engaged in them must be disinterested: they have to display initiative instead of dependence, and that not for personal advantage. Government in the great nations has changed from being the directing of the community's affairs to being the harmonizing of the direction which the community itself gives to its affairs. The government no longer rules; it adds its force to men's rule of themselves. That is why prohibition enforcement is a failure, and the prevention of jewel-smuggling a success. In sexual relations parenthood has been made voluntary by birth control and lasting marriage by easy divorce. This means, to Mr. Lippmann, that for marriage to result in children, and for it to be itself a successful partnership, the parties must grow disinterested.

He concludes:

> We begin to see, I think, that the evidence converges upon the theory that what the sages have prophesied as high religion, what psychologists delineate as matured personality, and the disinterestedness that the Great Society requires for its practical fulfillment, are all of a piece, and are the basic elements of modern morality.[3]

Such are, imperfectly summarized, the contents of the two books. Perhaps it will seem to my reader that the two have little in common. What, however, I find is that they are two examples of one operation. Further, I find that it is the French which should be compared with the American, and not *vice versa*, because, of the two writers, the American performs the operation both more ingeniously and more thoroughly.

III

To me it appears unmistakable that what Mr. Mauriac is

[3] P. 323.

attempting in his essay is to justify the writing of novels *even* if Christianity is true, and that what Mr. Lippmann is attempting in his is to justify American materialism *even* if what he calls "the teaching of the sages" is true. That is why I regard the two essays as comparable.

Mr. Mauriac tries, I say, to justify the writing of novels. He declares that nowadays the novel-reader seeks to discover in a novel the novelist it secretes in order to learn from the novelist's kinship with himself what should be his attitude to life. He declares that those of his own novels which certain people have found most daring are the very novels which have influenced other souls most powerfully in a religious direction. He declares that, provided the novelist is disinterested, and is careful to portray life exactly as it is, without intervening in the destiny of his characters in order to prove or demonstrate, the novel can carry us forward in our knowledge of man.

The arguments are, in themselves, disputable. Can Mr. Mauriac produce a single instance of the disinterested novelist, of the novelist who has succeeded in portraying life exactly as it is? What, in any case, does he mean by: "life exactly as it is"? Let him point to the novel which carries us forward in our knowledge of man. And while, no doubt, people do nowadays obtain part of their attitude to life from novels, if the novelist cannot possibly portray life exactly as it is, and if no novel carries us forward in our knowledge of man, that people do this can only be matter for regret. As for Mr. Mauriac's claim that certain of his novels have influenced human souls in a religious direction, one would, with all respect for his feelings, like to know the precise extent of that influence.

Whether the arguments he advances are sound or not is, however, immaterial. The point is that there cannot, strictly speaking, be any justification of novel-writing if Christianity

is true. Mr. Mauriac mentions how he found that "de très hauts et très saints personnages," to whom he once sought to justify his writing, "ne faisaient aucune différence essentielle entre moi et, par exemple, l'auteur de la Revue des Folies-Bergère,"[4] and concludes that this was because the personages in question had lacked leisure to study the aesthetic problem. But far more likely it was simply because they were aware that the writing of novels cannot, for Christians, be justified. Mr. Mauriac himself shows, to some extent, why.

He says that the imaginative writer must depict the passions, and consequently that the reading of imaginative literature is, for the Christian, fraught with peril. But the peril lurks for the Christian not only in the reading; it lies also, and even more, in the writing. The effect which the writing of novels may have on the novelist Mr. Mauraic neglects to consider. Yet the writer, in order to depict the passions, must, even more than the reader, dwell on those passions in his imagination. Moreover, they are, especially in the case of the psychological novelist, his own passions. "Écrire," Mr. Mauriac says,[5] "c'est se livrer." He admits, too, that "l'artiste, lui, joue son va-tout sur des sentiments, sur des sensations."[6] That is to say, whereas other workers are led to lose themselves in their work, the novelist's task brings him at once back to himself: the very material with which he labours is himself, his feelings, and his sensations. The novelist is ever self-preoccupied, and savours in his egotism an undoubtedly sensual gratification. That is to say, it is an egotism which, for the Christian, is sinful. Hence, the Christian should, for his own sake, even more than for the sake of such others as might read

[4] Pp. 155-6.
[5] P. 69.
[6] P. 125.

him, refrain from novel-writing. And if, after all, he does turn novelist, there can be no justification. All he can say is that, notwithstanding his efforts, his prayers, and his willingness to let Divine Grace operate, he is unable to resist the temptation to write.

In an attenuated form, that is what Mr. Mauriac does say. He declares that the imaginative writer cannot help himself. And if he stopped at that, there would be nothing to which to object. He would have answered Mr. Gide. But he is not content to stop at that. As I say, he insists as well on trying to justify his novel-writing. And such an attempt at justification immediately converts his defence of the charge brought against him by Mr. Gide into a plea of: guilty. For Mr. Gide is not, when he accuses Mr. Mauriac of not losing sight of Mammon, referring to the god of riches, as Mr. Mauriac assumes when he remarks, somewhat bitterly, that it is not enough to say that he has his eye on Mammon: "Tout le monde peut me voir au premier rang de la foule qui l'assiège."[7] Mammon is not only the name of the god of riches; it is also the name of the god of this world. And when Mr. Mauriac insists on trying to justify novel-writing at the same time as he declares Christianity to be true, certainly he is both admitting that his duty is to love God and paying tribute to the god of this world. For him to protest that Mr. Gide is mistaken is of no avail. It was with that that Mr. Gide, in speaking of "ce compromis rassurant qui permette d'aimer Dieu sans perdre de vue Mammon," was precisely charging him.

Mr. Gide's accusation hoisted Mr. Mauriac on the horns of a dilemma. Either he had to justify novel-writing and repudiate Christianity, or he had to hold to Christianity and repudiate novel-writing. In his essay he refuses to accept this

[7] P. 124.

dilemma. He does not repudiate either one or the other. He attempts to stand by both.

Thereby he not only causes judgment to be rendered in favour of Mr. Gide; he attempts the impossible. He attempts to obey the behest of the clergyman, Morell, to the commercial success, Burgess, in Mr. Shaw's play *Candida*. The behest is:

> So long as you come here honestly as a self-respecting, thorough, convinced scoundrel, justifying your scoundrelism, and proud of it, you are welcome.[8]

But while scoundrelism remains scoundrelism, though one may well be a scoundrel — that is only too easy — to justify one's scoundrelism is impossible, and one cannot be proud of it.

Yet it is just because Mr. Mauriac thus attempts the impossible that his essay transcends the minor problem of the novelist's ethics, with which it is ostensibly concerned, and becomes representative of that French movement to emulate America to which I began by referring. For this attempting, as he does in his little book, to justify scoundrelism, and be proud of it, is, I believe, something characteristically American. Of that Mr. Lippmann's essay is an example.

IV

As I have said, Mr. Lippmann's essay appears to me as an attempt to justify American materialism *even* if what he calls "the teaching of the sages" is true. I say: *American* materialism because Mr. Lippmann is an American, as Mr. Mauriac is a novelist: he is an American writing chiefly for Americans. What I mean by: materialism, is no more than this: that he dwells on what he terms "three great phases of human in-

[8] *Plays Pleasant*, p. 93.

terest,"[9] on business, government, and sexual relations; and everywhere, of course, business is undertaken, government discharged, and sex assorted with sex, for material ends. In America, in particular, they are ends summed up by the slogans: Prosperity! and, The Right to be Happy! Prosperity! and, The Right to be Happy! are the twin stars, the Gemini, which can be said to be guiding today the individual American destiny. And the hitching of that destiny to those stars is what Mr. Lippmann attempts to justify.

He attempts to justify it by declaring that what "the Great Society requires for its practical fulfillment"[10] is disinterestedness, and that this disinterestedness is "what we are really driving at in our manifold activity," is "what, rather dimly, we do want."[11] The valuation of human life according to its disinterestedness, "once the possession of an élite, now conforms," he says, "to the premises of a whole civilization." The ideal of disinterestedness is inherent and inevitable in the modern world. In business, in government, and in sexual relations, it is an ideal now implicit and necessary.[12]

What is this ideal of disinterestedness? It is, he says, the ideal of matured personality spoken of by Dr. Freud. Thus, when he says that disinterestedness is now being attained by us individually through our manifold activity, he means, I take it, that our contemporary activity in business, government, and sexual relations, assists us in that progress from infantilism to maturity which is as what the history of each soul should, he says, be regarded.[13] The process of maturing consists for a man in "a revision of his desires in the light of an understanding of reality . . . He begins to see his wishes in

[9] P. 231.
[10] P. 323.
[11] P. 230.
[12] Pp. 230-1.
[13] P. 174.

a context and in perspective."[14] And by understanding reality "we create new objects of desire."[15] We come gradually "to be able to observe our own feelings as if they were objective facts, to detach ourselves from our own fears, hates, and lusts, to examine them, name them, identify them, understand their origin, and finally to judge them."[16]

The arguments by which Mr. Lippmann seeks to show that this ideal of maturity is "inherent and inevitable in the modern world," *i.e.*, seeks to show that the world's activity involved with business, government, and sexual relations, is leading us all individually to attain a Freudian maturity of personality, are extremely ingenious. But they are not convincing. Undoubtedly the alteration of living conditions does result in the production of new objects of desire, but that (a) the magnitude of the great commercial corporations, and their — invariably restricted — socialization (to use Mr. Lippmann's word); (b) the decentralization of government, and its dependence on civic coöperation; and (c) the facilities for controlling births and being frequently divorced, are jointly leading us to change the objects of our desire, so that, for example, we come to reject satisfactions of curiosity of the type, hanging up a cat by its tail, and seek instead satisfactions of curiosity of the type, measuring the diameter of Betelgeuse,[17] there is not the slightest reason, in all he says, to believe. No doubt people in America do, most of them, come through experience to acquire a certain modicum of worldly wisdom, as matured personality was formerly called, but that the conditions of business, government, and sexual relations, there today, assist the acquisition to a greater extent

[14] P. 180.
[15] P. 181.
[16] P. 219.
[17] P. 169.

than conditions elsewhere have assisted it in the past, I can see, and certainly Mr. Lippmann produces, no evidence. Moreover: what is that reality which, he says, we come to understand? What are the ourselves which can, he says, be detached from our own fears, hates, and lusts? Can we indeed come, as he says we can, to understand the origin of our own feelings, or is all we can understand Dr. Freud's theory as to such an origin? These are questions which must all be answered before Mr. Lippmann's thesis can be seriously entertained. No clue to their answer is contained in his book.

Thus, just as, quite apart from the truth or falsity of Christianity, Mr. Mauriac's arguments in justification of novel-writing turn out to be disputable, so, quite apart from whether "the teaching of the sages" is true or false, does Mr. Lippmann's contention that business, government, and the sexual relations, are now exacting from Americans some form of maturity, a certain disinterestedness, turn out to be disputable. But if, so far, the two essays are parallel, they thereupon sharply diverge.

For in attempting to justify novel-writing even if Christianity is true, it never occurs to the French innocence of Mr. Mauriac to misrepresent the nature of Christian dogma. He confines himself to distorting the functions of the novelist and of the novel. But in attempting to justify American materialism even if "the teaching of the sages" is true, Mr. Lippmann is not content with contending that, in pursuing the ends which are pursued in business, government, and sexual relations, Americans are fulfilling an ideal unawares, even as Monsieur Jourdain spoke prose unawares. He must needs also insist that what the pursuit of those ends is producing, and what Dr. Freud means by matured personality, are "high

religion," are the extra-terrestrial disinterestedness of which "the sages" taught. Mr. Mauriac bows down before Mammon, yet he never dreams of identifying Mammon with God. But, for Mr. Lippmann, God *is* Mammon!

V

It may be that the disinterestedness to which Mr. Lippmann's great teachers, Aristotle, the author of the Fourth Gospel, Buddha, and Spinoza,[18] spoke of converting the will, is something illusory. That is a question which need not, on this occasion, be discussed. But, whether what they referred to exists or not, it is quite certain that by disinterestedness they did not mean worldly wisdom, the learning of the lessons of experience.[19] They did not, by a disinterested man, mean a man enabled to live in the land of heart's desire.[20] They did not mean a man seeking to satisfy, with new objects, the same desires that an ordinary man seeks to satisfy[21] — mundane, temporal, and carnal desires, such as may be satisfied in business, government, and sexual relations. They meant a man whose desires themselves had become entirely different from those of the ordinary man. They would have denied that "whatever is righteous is inherently desirable because experience will demonstrate its desirability."[22] Their ideal was not "the ideal way of life for men who must make their own terms with experience and find their own happiness."[23] They did not give devotion to this latter ideal the name of "the religion of the spirit."[24]

Hence, it cannot be true, as Mr. Lippmann says it is, that, thanks to Dr. Freud, and modern psychology in general, "the

[18] P. 194.
[19] P. 181.
[20] P. 151.
[21] P. 181.
[22] P. 137.
[23] P. 326.
[24] P. 327.

world is able at last to take seriously what its greatest teachers have said,"[25] any more than it can be true, as Professor Eddington contends, in *The Nature of the Physical World*, that, because physicists ascribe to the electron uncaused movements, we may now venture to assert the freedom of our own choices.

But not only that. It is evident that, whereas Mr. Mauriac, in his attempt to justify novel-writing even if Christianity is true, is content to falsify the functions of the novelist and of the novel, and never dreams of palming off Christian dogma as what it is not, Mr. Lippmann, in his attempt to justify American materialism even if "the teaching of the sages" is true, is not satisfied with denaturing the materialism, but insists as well on misrepresenting "the teaching of the sages." That is how the American essay is more ingenious and more thorough than the French one.

What Mr. Lippmann terms his insight is, indeed, an example of that sham vision, and what he calls his ideal an example of that mock spirituality, to which Mr. Irving Babbitt refers in the following passage:

> The worst difficulties of the present time arise, I am sometimes tempted to think, even less from lack of vision than from sham vision. Otherwise stated, what is disquieting about the time is not so much its open and avowed materialism as what it takes to be its spirituality.[26]

Moreover, his is a thesis only an American could promote. That is why I have ventured to emphasize that it is American materialism which he is attempting to justify. He begins by declaring that there are those among us "who feel that there is a vacancy in their lives,"[27] and that "it is not possible to be

[25] *ibid.*

[26] *Democracy and Leadership*, pp. 16-7.

[27] P. 3.

wholly at peace."[28] He ends by saying that, in order to fill the vacancy, and attain peace, we have merely, provided we avail ourselves of the teachings of "modern psychology," to continue along the way we are going! Thus do I find his thesis typically American. It is another example of that American optimism according to which, if we only keep straight on, heaven must be no more than a mile away, and the celestial dawn round the next corner. It is one more sop for Americans' frantic anxiety to be assured that the pursuit of money and sensual enjoyment must be the pursuit of an ideal. It is one more yawp of "Service!"

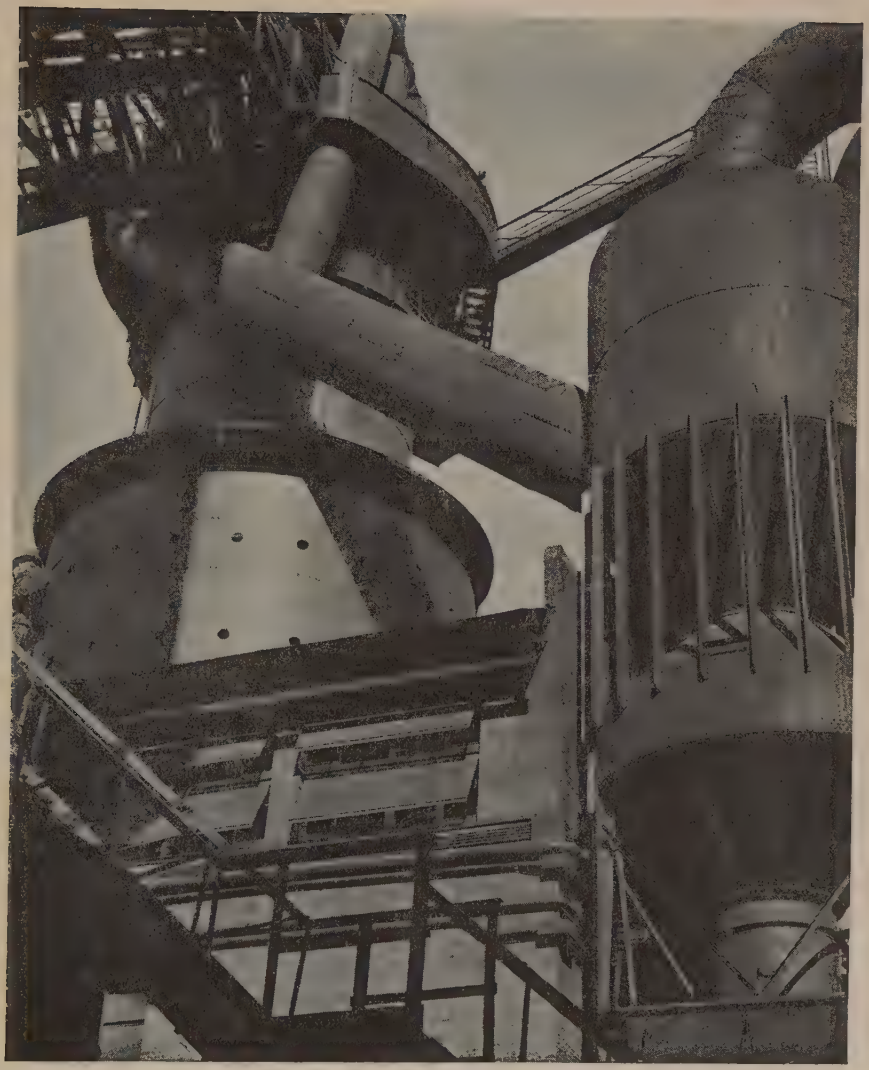
And if Mr. Lippmann's essay is typically American, no doubt Mr. Mauriac's can be regarded as equally French. In that case, here is, I take it, the lesson to be drawn from comparing the two. France, in displaying with the rest of the world the determination defined by Mr. Julien Benda when he says:[29] "Mankind today displays with an efficiency and a consciousness hitherto unknown its determination to situate itself in the *real* or *practical* mode of existence in contrast to the *disinterested* or *metaphysical* mode," France tends more and more, it would seem, to adopt American methods. But since Mr. Lippmann's essay is, in the sense I have sought to indicate, so much more ingenious and thorough than Mr. Mauriac's, one may conclude that what Matthew Arnold in 1888 said of the United States to the English, "We have a good deal to learn from them," can still be said to the French. It must be an edifying lesson for Americans.

MONTGOMERY BELGION

[28] P. 7.
[29] *La Trahison des Clercs*, p. 50.

Ford Plant 1 Charles Sheeler

Ford Plant 2 Charles Sheeler



Ford Plant 3 Charles Sheeler

Ford Plant 4 Charles Sheeler

ART CHRONICLE

The "American Note"?

We all trouped into the second exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art hoping to discover at last what American painting was, and we all went away, or at least one of us went away, more confused than before. The painters born in this country were already heterogeneous enough, but it really was troubling to find that the "American artists" also included Pascin, who is *Le Rire* slicked up for snobs, and Kunyoshi, whose wit is as Japanese as Sharaku's. If these are American, then what is — or rather, is anything not — American?

All this sets one to ransacking the past for some, for any, shared and distinguishing preference. In the beginning, Copley and Stuart were as little American as Washington Irving. I see no quality up and down the Hudson River, unless it be a timid dullness. Eakins is different, for he had a flair for awkwardness that is as American as Lincoln. He was probably our only really native portrait painter, but he was self generated and left no posterity. Sargent, like Henry James, showed his Americanism by repulsions rather than by attractions; our insane impermanence drove them both to established titles and old world gardens. This was an acutely American distaste, but where has our painting expressed an American taste? Was it in Winslow Homer, who is certainly alone in having discovered American surroundings that he could accept with gusto? It is significant that these surroundings were almost uninhabited by Americans. If an "American note" should exist, it is not the love of one's neighbors. It was probably our impermanence, as well as disgust with people, that sent Winslow Homer to the forests and the everlastingness of surf, just as the same causes sent Sargent to the hereditary exclusions of Europe.

Must we conclude that dismay is the only native note in our painting? It must be dismay that has prevented the growth of any school of portrait painting (since one Eakins cannot make a school). It disheartens every painter, native or foreign, to face an American. The average American is no more stupid than the men and women that Rembrandt painted, but he is apt to look paper thin because he has no traditional stock of wisdom, no root in any ground. An American face

looks into your face with one suspicion: are you different? It is itself too destitute to afford a difference, or even a secret, let alone the luxury of a passion. Its poverty is envious. In the suburbs at night each uncurtained window glares its electricity into all the surrounding uncurtained windows to make sure that nothing be private, that every emptiness be on display. Panopticon. Panacousticon. And who cares? Certainly no portrait painter.

Whatever does it, the American painter seems to be exiled to landscape, his one retreat. There is his compensation. He becomes acutely sensitive to the expression of a landscape, as though he were studying the only face that would ever be his to love. He stalks and surprises the secret delicacies of nature. John Marin's salt freshness, Burchfield's uncanny sensitiveness to the hour of the day and the lateness or earliness of the month, these are responses unlike those of other schools of landscape painting.

> "Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
> Whistle about us their spontaneous cry."

Is this, then, the "American note"? And will it stand up beside structure, as Cézanne and Ruysdael practiced it?

THE PEGASUS PRESS

The Pegasus Press* issued its first book some three years ago. In this short time it has already established itself as one of the best, if not the very best, series of books on art. These are not books for specialists. They are for everyone who loves the treasure of the past. Yet this wide appeal does not mean that they are mere re-hashes of old material, for each book must be passed upon by an international committee of some of the soundest scholars of our time, including such men as Berenson, Venturi, Morey, Goldschmidt, etc. Each book is issued in at least three languages: in the language of the author, in English, in French or German, and in Italian or Spanish. The Pegasus Press has secured the coöperation of all Europe for the manufacture of the books: the text is printed in Verona, the plates in Munich or Paris, and they are bound up in Leipzig. The result is far from what most people nowadays mean by "fine books," that is, rag paper and red morocco for wealthy illiterates; the excellence of these books is unobtrusive. The letterpress is handsomely legible, the binding stout, and

the reproductions as exact and luminous as the most modern processes can make them. It is only by the international scope of the series, by using one printing of the plates for editions in several languages that such excellent books can be produced for such moderate prices.

These books are of two kinds: those which extend our knowledge of the past with unpublished photographs and data (like the Oriental books of the series), and those which clarify our views by summarizing scattered researches and making anthologies of monuments, like most of the mediaeval and Renaissance books of the series. It is odd that there should be no books on Greece, Rome or Byzantium. One could wish, for instance, that some really good photographer, such as Clarence Kennedy of Smith, could be got to photograph the masterpieces of archaic sculpture that are lost in the provincial museums of Greece.

The Pegasus Press has already secured M. Capart to perform such a service for Egypt, in a series of five volumes which is to publish photographs of Egyptian works (most of them in private collections and small museums) until sufficient material shall be gathered to make a history of Egyptian art possible. The first volume of these sumptuous plates has already sold out. Does that indicate that we are at last discovering the delicate, almost secret adjustments of Egyptian art?

The two volumes of *Early Indian Sculpture* publish enough new photographs to change one's ideas of the subject. The Greek Ghandara sculptures are presented as unimportant and late, no longer as the unique link between sculpture in the West and sculpture in the East. The dates are still too confused to be sure of much, despite the author's labors to fix them. Bachhofer has tried to criticize from a sculptor's point of view. The aim is praiseworthy, but calls for a more instinctive feeling for the craft than he possesses. Indian sculpture from 300 B.C. to 200 A.D. surprises one with its feeling for the body, a sane exuberance, and a voluptuous vigor which is the strangest mood for illustrating the life of Buddha.

Just as this book alters our view of Indian sculpture by fitting the few pieces that we knew into the mass of recent discoveries, so also *The Islamic Book* sheds a new light on the familiar Persian and Moghul miniatures by showing their ancestors, the scraps of early Arabic books newly recovered from the rubbish heaps of Egypt. The

many illustrations of intricate geometric bindings are full of suggestions for any practicing bookbinder. Sir Thomas Arnold's part of the introduction is most charmingly written, full of quaint anecdotes translated out of old manuscripts. He unfortunately never refers to the illustrations, which makes it difficult to coördinate them with the text.

Kingsley Porter's *Spanish Romanesque Sculpture* is another book which publishes a mass of new things. Mr. Porter has carried his cameras and his stepladders into inaccessible retreats of Spain and has brought back photographs of wonderful mediaeval remains, many whose very names have been forgotten for centuries. For studying sculpture, a book like this is better than actual travel, for there is no need to wish oneself on stilts to see the capitals, no peerings into vaults with candles. The illustrations are so beautiful, and the whole book is so warm with the gusto of a hunter for his trophies, that it is mean to doubt Mr. Porter's conviction that Spain gave the Romanesque to France and Italy. Conjectural as all that must remain in the absence of further data, the plates alone of this book make it indispensable for an architect, or for any lover of the Romanesque. A good part of the introduction is devoted to the origins of the Romanesque, going back to the end of the Roman Empire. This is one of the most baffling ages of Europe, what with its Armenian bishops in Scandinavia, its unexplained connections between Ireland and Egypt. It is to be hoped that the book on *Italian Painting before Giotto*, which Mr. Berenson has promised to the Pegasus Press, will throw more light on this time, for almost no other is so worth investigating.

The two books on French Gothic sculpture fill a very different need. Two or three generations of French scholars have searched out and arranged this material. The period of discovery is past; it is time for selection and right emphasis, and these two anthologies have been prepared with skill and taste. The text is concise and accurate, the photographs excellently chosen and clearly arranged for comparison. One can measure the superiority of the Pegasus Press reproductions by comparing Houvet's photographs of Chartres as they appear in these books with the same ones as they appear in Houvet's own books. The gain is surprising. M. Vitry's introduction annoys one somewhat by criticizing early Gothic sculpture from a naturalistic standpoint, instead of regarding it from the standpoint of a sculptor who is trying to

serve architecture. This section of the series will be completed by the publication of *The Romanesque Sculpture of France* by Paul Deschamps.

The aim of these three books is similar to the aim of the two on *German Illumination*, which offer a wonderful collection of miniatures that have appeared only in stray monographs and in books now difficult to obtain. Some of these German illuminations are the most disconcerting works of the Middle Ages. St. Augustine's thunderbolt of grace seems to have struck off its very liveliest sparks at Reichenau. These illuminations could supply a generation of stained glass makers with designs. These two books are the most conveniently arranged of all the Pegasus Press, since the entire data for each illustration is printed right on its protecting tissue paper. Adolf Goldschmidt is the great authority on German manuscripts, and his two introductions are admirable summaries of half a century of scattered researches.

The book on *English Illumination* does not benefit by a similar accumulation of research, and the text is necessarily far less authoritative. The Irish and Anglo-Saxon illuminations are well represented, but the Gothic ones not so fully. And how, indeed, should they be, when the riches of the very Bodleian are not yet thoroughly known, let alone the private libraries? (Only four or five years ago the Bodleian discovered that it had owned for generations the earliest known illustrated MS of Dante.) The book on English wall paintings is less interesting, for the walls have preserved only from a late period, and imperfectly, what the illuminations have preserved from all periods and freshly. These frescos have had to be represented by water color copies, either because the light was bad for photographing them or because they were so effaced. This is a pity, since much of their original fragrance must evaporate in transfusion. The book is interesting, although one cannot help thinking that these soft and florid murals are mere lagging dependencies of French and Flemish painting. One always closes an English book about English antiquities with the feeling that it was all very good fun, but a little helter skelter; that parochial pieties have blinded the authors to general views.

One does not find this fault with Venturi's admirable account of *Giovanni Pisano*. It is compact, orderly and complete so far as our present knowledge goes. There is also a good appreciation of this dramatic sculptor, who would have been so much more at home in

Bernini's time. It is a pity that Venturi's well prepared text should receive but perfunctory illustration from Alinari's stock photographs. It is, of course, far more difficult to take a good picture of sculpture than of painting, for the photographer must study his statue from all angles, under all the shifting lights of the day, and sometimes he must wait for a winter or a summer sun, as Houvet often had to do at Chartres. Good photography of sculpture stands out by its rarity; there is Houvet's work at Chartres, Walter Hege's at Naumburg, and a few Greek photographs (for the most part unpublished) by Clarence Kennedy. It is a pity that there is no one with as good an eye for lighting and detail working for any of the great photographing firms of Europe.

Pietro Toesca's book on *Trecento Painting in Florence* is in many respects the masterpiece, so far, of the Pegasus Press. One has but to look through the illustrations to see what a fresh light he has cast upon that hackneyed subject. His choice of details to be photographed has brought out hidden aspects of Giotto. I had always imagined that Giotto deliberately drained his faces of expression in order to charge the whole body with a kind of emotional static. These plates show that on the contrary, the faces are expressive all alone. Over half the illustrations are of Giotto's work. The text also centres on him, his origins and the partition of his legacy to painting. Toesca never once allows himself to be distracted into attributing third rate paintings to fourth rate "masters," that dissipation that has turned the criticism of Italian art into a quibbling kind of parlor game. He has brought all his powers to focus on masterpieces that are so familiar that we have ceased to see them. He has then given their background and their context. The result is a revelation where it was least to be expected. The Pegasus Press promises another book by him on *Florentine Painting of the Quattrocento.*

It is a pity that there is no second Toesca to give order and emphasis to the three other books on later Italian painting. Corrado Ricci's study of *North Italian Painting of the Cinquecento* was needed, but the writing is diffuse and the ideas without focus. Fifty-five artists are represented in eighty-four plates, and the result is confusing, although they share a certain dreadful family likeness, since they are all Leonardo's bastards. The book on *Venetian Painting of the Seicento and the Settecento* is the only work that falls conspicuously below the

standard of the Pegasus Press. The introduction is oratorical and misinformed. One is astonished to read that Tintoretto "never made sketches," and that "Magnasco . . . was the forerunner of half of Goya's work and of more than half of Daumier's," when it is most doubtful if they ever heard his name. It would have been wiser to confine the book to Venetian painting of the Settecento, from Piazzetta to Guardi, let us say, and leave out the Seicento that so monotonously echoes Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese. Aldo de Rinaldis' book on *Neapolitan Painting of the Seicento* throws an amusing light on the operatic exuberance of the time, its gusto for illuminated clouds and trombones and dungeons. These three books mark the change of taste that has come since the war, the revival of the Baroque.

The book of Tiepolo drawings is one of the happiest and freshest in all the Pegasus Press. Baron von Hadeln has written the briefest introduction possible in order to make room for about twice the usual number of plates. Tiepolo's paintings delight one with their athletic ease, but his drawings much more so. Tiepolo had launched himself into the inmost beat of the eighteenth century, where all is billowed aloft on gusts of pleasure, all is sunlight and ascensions and suspensions.

The Baroque Architecture of Prague is another delightful book. It shows the city as old residents know it, takes one to attic windows that look across a jumble of tiles and weedy cornices and old stone urns whose carved flames moulder under mosses, it unlocks the walls of steep gardens, where vines cascade about the struggling caryatids. All the Baroque is there, with its freezing magnificence and its logic of irrelevance. There is only one blemish to the book: the plates do not print clearly on the handmade paper.

This is the present list of the Pegasus Press. It is adding books all the time, and promises excellent things for the future, such as Toesca on *Quattrocento Painting in Florence*, Berenson on *Italian Painting before Giotto*, and Charles Vignier on *Oriental Art*. The books are naturally of varying merit, but the board of editors have in every case chosen the man best suited to each task. Few art books endure; they become antiquated almost as fast as books of science. Yet in this series there are a number that come as near as possible to being definitive and that will remain useful, and some of them essential, for years to come.

A. Hyatt Mayor

*Documents pour Servir à l'Étude de l'Art Egyptien. By Jean Capart. Vol. I. $90.

Early Indian Sculpture. By Ludwig Bachhofer. About 100 pages of text and 161 plates. 2 vols. $63.

The Islamic Book. By Sir Thomas Arnold & A. Grohmann. About 130 pages of text and 104 plates (10 in color). $63.

Spanish Romanesque Sculpture. By A. Kingsley Porter. 200 pages of text and 160 plates. 2 vols. $63.

Gothic Sculpture in France (1150-1225). By Marcel Aubert. 120 pages of text and 88 plates. $31.50.

Gothic Sculpture in France (1225-1270). By Paul Vitry. 120 pages of text and 90 plates. $31.50.

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English Illumination. By O. Elfrida Saunders. 130 pages of text and 129 plates. 2 vols. $56.

English Mediaeval Painting. By Tancred Borenius and E. W. Tristram. 75 pages of text and 101 plates. $31.50.

Giovanni Pisano. By Adolfo Venturi. 70 pages of text and 120 plates. $42.

Florentine Painting of the Trecento. By Pietro Toesca. 82 pages of text and 119 plates. $42.

North Italian Painting of the Cinquecento. By Corrado Ricci. 80 pages of text and 84 plates. $31.50.

Venetian Painting of the Seicento & the Settecento. By Giuseppe Fiocco. 97 pages of text and 88 plates. $31.50.

Neapolitan Painting of the Seicento. By Aldo de Rinaldis. 80 pages of text and 81 plates. $31.50.

The Drawings of Tiepolo. By Detlev von Hadeln. 35 pages of text and 200 plates. 2 vols. $63.

Baroque Architecture of Prague. By E. Dostal and J. Sima. About 30 pages of text and 156 plates. $35.

MUSIC CHRONICLE

Some Practical Difficulties of Musical Criticism

The critic of music labors under greater disadvantages than the critic of any other art. He addresses himself primarily to the music-lover, rather than to the musician; and between these two there is a gap far wider than that which separates, for example, the lover of poetry from the poet. For a person may enjoy music keenly, and have pronounced tastes and powers of discrimination, and still be the equivalent of a complete illiterate, who not only can neither read nor write, but being ignorant of the rules of pronunciation and grammar, cannot even trust himself to speak. Again, the art-critic, writing for the benefit of the art-lover, rather than for that of the painter or sculptor, is not so severely handicapped as the critic of music. For he can describe a painting as fully as he chooses, from its general arrangement of color and form, down to the smallest detail. The reader has only to look attentively at the reproduction on the opposite page, or at the original, if available, in order to follow him step by step through his analysis. Better still, the critic of painting can describe in plain language, and be understood. He can speak of one patch of yellow balancing another, and lines or "movements" converging to a certain point, etc.

But the music critic may not describe in plain language. If he wishes to point out some passage in a symphony, the significance of which would be likely to escape the average listener, he has no equivalent to such matter-of-fact terms as "a patch of yellow," or "a point at which such and such lines meet." He must clothe his account in vague metaphorical language, devoid of simplicity or precision; in short, try to make his meaning clear in terms that may well suggest something different to everybody. Thus, suppose one wished to call attention to a certain very beautiful entrance of the 'cello in the slow movement of Mozart's G minor String Quintet. If one said: "After two measures' rest the 'cello enters on a G-flat in the bass, delaying the subsequent cadence in B-flat major by giving, with the C-flat in the treble (Neapolitan sixth become sub-dominant) the fleeting impression of affirming the key of G-flat" — who but a trained musician would recognize this passage when he heard it? If, on the other

hand one described it in some such manner as this: "Mozart seldom cared to sustain a mood of unrelieved anguish. The mournful descending phrases on the violin, each one a deeper sigh than the last, seem to presage the declaration of some unbearable grief. But nothing of the sort follows. Instead, the sombre accompaniment of repeated chords all at once ceases; the melody retains its plaintive character, but we feel it, as it were, timidly plucking at our sleeve, as though to lead us into sunnier paths. The 'cello is silent for a brief interval, and then enters once more, on a note deep in the bass, which is held with sustaining tenderness throughout the measure. It seems to arrive as a kind of grave parental sanction to the timid suggestion just made by the violin—and what intimations does it not hold of the smiling landscape about to be spread before us!" It is not unlikely that the reader will be better able to recognize the G-flat entrance of the 'cello from this description than from the other. At all events he has been prepared for it in the only way possible in such a case: that is, by a series of emotional and sensory suggestions arranged in dramatic sequence. Everything but the sequence is essentially arbitrary. The principal aim was to throw the 'cello's entrance into relief. But the music itself has hardly a more necessary connection with these particular suggestions than have the objects in a game of make-believe with what they symbolize in a child's mind; — when a book may become an automobile, and a sprig of leaves a person, who drives to an armchair called London. The evocative power of music is such that a mere shred of plausibility often suffices to give a "story," woven around some purely musical sequence, an air of seeming aptness.

The honest critic can only hope that where his object is attained — that simply, in the case I am considering, of bringing out the significance of a passage in such a way as to make it possible for the untrained but sensitive listener to identify it — the latter will dissociate what he hears from all this superposed "program" and listen only to the sounds. For except in certain vocal and dramatic forms, the evocative power of music is *auxiliary*. Its intrinsic power requires no image to heighten it, since its full quality is defined in the sounds themselves.

But to the critic, as I have tried to show, this evocative power is indispensable. Without it he would be on the horns of a dilemma; thanks to it he can be carried more or less comfortably between them. For what chiefly complicates his task is the fact that nearly everyone is

familiar with the pure expressive qualities of music, for which no exact equivalent in words can be found; but only the trained musician is familiar with its formal aspects: harmonies, proportions, technical procedures, etc., for which there are accepted symbols. The kind of paraphrase attempted on the passage from Mozart's Quintet suggests what is perhaps the nearest approach to a solution of the problem: namely a compromise between what cannot be defined at all, and what can be accurately described only in terms that will be meaningless to the uninitiated. The practical test of its validity is whether or not it succeeds in sharpening the listener's attention, in preparing him for a more detailed (or, as may be, a broader) understanding of a composition. Theoretically, it is justified when the imagery employed fulfills a double purpose: that is, when it not only *suggests* the indefinable expression of the music, but also paraphrases the exact symbols describing some formal aspect of it. Either purpose can be fulfilled thanks only to the music's evocative power: another paraphrase, in which totally different images were used, might do as well or better.

It is evidently almost impossible for criticism of this kind to be based on the experience of a few hearings of a work. The critic's reactions may, broadly speaking, be "sound" enough, but unless he is one of those supremely gifted musicians, with an ear that promptly perceives the chemistry of everything it hears, and a memory that retains it all, the images he employs in the discussion and defense of a judgment more or less casually formed will be impressionistic and incomplete. They will suggest only the effect the music has had upon him, and will lack the objective validity that would accrue to them through being also a paraphrase of the terms in which the music was to be strictly analyzed.

THEODORE CHANLER

THEATRICAL CHRONICLE

The New York Stage and Some Recent Revues

It is a little hard to see what business a quarterly has to concern itself with the American, which is actually the New York stage. New York is the world's largest market for theatrical goods; it buys the products of every country, every class and every clique; but so far it has itself shown little more than commercial enterprise. New York will patronize Noel Coward, Rheinhardt, the Chauve Souris, Copeau, or the Moscow Art Theatre; it will support talent developed in provincial vaudeville circuits, and produce folk plays from North Carolina or Oklahoma, and yet it cannot grow anything of its own. The revue is its characteristic form. *The Little Show* is one of the very best of recent revues. Clifton Webb, its leading man, owes his lightness and ease to the fact that he is an Englishman, and his dancing to his studies in American tap, with most probably experience on the vaudeville stage. Libby Holman is a voice and a blues mood. She is middle western influenced by Harlem. She is authentically theatrical and American, but she owes none of this to New York. *The Little Show* has more gusto and originality, as well as a better trained chorus, than *Wake Up and Dream*, the current Charles B. Cochran production from London. The latter has a more light and easy tone, and is more consistently sophisticated. Both of them owe their success to talent which they neither discovered nor developed. *Wake Up and Dream* utilizes several South American dancers, several German dancers, a French costumier, a Bostonian musician. Its significance is limited to the economic fact of getting them all together for this one show. It establishes nothing capable of enduring for a few years. At most it is interesting as an indication of metropolitan taste, and of the conditions under which the theatre precariously exists. A quarterly has no business to try to keep up with the many-headed show business, like the reviewers on the daily papers, for the New York stage as a whole is as unstable and as sterile as a revue. But it may sample the diet from time to time, and so get an idea of what we should have to overcome before we had a theatre.

It is on this principle that this department will be conducted. There

will be no attempt to cover the season, or even all the major hits. It will briefly describe a few shows, picked almost at random. If they show any hopeful symptoms we shall not hesitate to applaud. But our chief interest in them will be to try to see through them to the conditions, economic, sociological, or cultural, which make them what they are.

THE RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

Since Morris Gest imported the Moscow Art Theatre and the Chauve Souris there has been a Russian Racket. For a time the Chauve Souris was the last word in sophisticated entertainment, and the name of the Moscow Art Theatre stood for some kind of revelation or new theatrical gospel. Perhaps for this reason the Guild calls its production of *Red Rust* experimental. This play from Bolshevik Russia is a sufficiently sincere picture of that regime, containing some scenes toward the end which have a kind of nightmarish, adolescent intensity. The acting and directing reminded one of the last years of the Provincetown: barbarous diction, untrained voices and bodies, and a conviction that to be strong you have to bellow. But while the speech at the Provincetown used to be provincial — middle western or rural Pennsylvania — the speech in *Red Rust* is preponderantly Bronx. The whole occasion had the unpleasant flavor of a children's party in a rich and vulgar mansion. But the Guild subscribers were interested in a picture of the Bolsheviks and pleasurably shocked by hearing profanity pronounced from the stage with great gusto.

At the same time Mr. Bulgakov and his group were reviving Gorki's *Lower Depths*, in a new translation called *At The Bottom*. The translation had the amusing and pithy crispness of American slang, given further point and "pep" by the unmistakably United States accents of the cast, which was as miscellaneous and hardly better trained than that of *Red Rust*. The contrast between this joyful and familiar language and the play itself, which is of a humanitarian, Tolstoyan, pseudo-primitive-Christian tinge, was very curious indeed. The production itself: business, sets, and costumes, was a faithful copy of the Moscow Art Theatre production. One of the most telling effects in the play is an off-stage fight between two women, which reaches a climax when one of the women is carried on stage maimed, in the midst of a large mob. All the main cues and timing in this mob scene were exactly reproduced, so exactly that they could be rec-

ognized by one in the audience who was very familiar with the original staging. This being true, it is impossible to say whether Mr. Bulgakov has anything of interest or not. It is fairly easy to copy some one else's direction. He certainly displays no very formidable originality. It is safe to say that this is not the way to utilize the discoveries of the Moscow Art Theatre. They developed a most deep and thorough technique of acting and directing, which may be learned in a period of years; but neither their taste, which is Russian and prewar, nor their actual productions, which belong by right to their creators, have anything to do with us.

Last year Miss Le Gallienne produced the *Cherry Orchard*, and it seems worth while to recall that production in this connection. She had Nazimova with her at that time, and she gave a beautiful Madame Ranevsky. Miss Le Gallienne was probably led to the play neither because of Nazimova nor because of the Russian Racket, but simply by the desire to add this play to her repertory. Miss Le Gallienne is interested in good plays; she is not interested in new plays, nor in new aspects of old plays. The acting at her theatre is unexciting; she directs as little as possible. In her modest aim of being a dollar classics series of the theatre she is entirely successful, and is repaid by the gratitude and the support she deserves. But it is important to define her limitations. In a society whose culture, as we have so often heard, is in the hands of its women; for a merchant city during a period of intellectual torpor, she does admirably. But with her comfortable atmosphere, as of a good old book and a deep chair; with her charming, appreciative and incredulous ease, she is emphatically not to be regarded as the white hope of the American stage.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

CORRESPONDENCE

AND THE REMAINDER

"One person out of every twenty-two in New York state spends a certain period in an insane asylum."

Paris edition of an American daily paper.

The mania of America (in the abstract) and of anglosaxons in general for choosing the second best, for getting Howells instead of H. James (et similiter . . .) is to the present author in moments of idleness (i.e. during those fifteen scattered days per annum when having finished one job he has not yet started another) a matter of recurrent (be it confessed) petty annoyance.

Mr. Rutter for example is far from the worst art critic in England. There are not more than three painters in England whose work cd. be hung beside "the old masters" without causing sensations leading ultimately to thought on the decadence of the race. Mr. Rutter in his *Evolution of Modern Art* reproduces a painting by Wyndham Lewis which easily indicates Lewis' position as first of this possible triad; he then reproduces a composition by Mrs. Dod Proctor which is pure Tate Gallery camouflaged by the slightest possible topwash of diluted cubation.

As America does not produce or at any rate does not publish critical works dealing with contemporary art or music one observes that the most interesting prose authors who have appeared since the publication of *Ulysses* do NOT have their volumes printed in America. In one case even though the novel had its latter parts serialized in the states it has gone to England (dead and decrepit ole England) to be published in book form. *Ulysses* also was serialized in America but its nonappearance there as a volume was due not to the cretinism of American publishers but to a law obviously framed by baboons for the further stultification of idiots. This law (together with several others indicating the complete unfitness of the murkn peepul to govern themselves) is (and are) needless to state, still on the statute books or in whatever secret drawers and inaccessible compartments the present

Hardingized-Coolidgized bureaucracy keeps its red string fish hooks.

For the honour of American publishing (such as it is) I must however record that I heard Horace Liveright offer Joyce a thousand dollars advance on a single edtn. of the book at a time when it hadn't the chance of a snowball in hell of being publishable in Manhattan.

For the rest the process of Howells-for-James; the process of getting Amygism for Imagism; the casting of a pale Lowelization on all things (Tate-Galleryism in England) continues in both the great anglosaxon blubocracies.

A certain number of locally and academically "eminent" are placed on the judging seats; the impossibility of their ever attaining an international position is never discussed, is never even suggested; the process of keeping America twenty years behind the critical position of pore ole Yourup goes on like a slow moving quagmire. One injects certain fragments of knowledge that ought to move the hands forward across the dial's face; the assininity of an earlier generation slowly recedes and at the end of the process one observes that the time consumed in the operation is exactly the fifteen or twenty years that measured one's own handicap fifteen or twenty years earlier.

Scribner's prints Callighan and not McAlmon. Of course they ought to print Callighan; The Guggenheim Foundation is conceived on "very broad lines," it recognizes, in principle, that its effectiveness depends on its choice of candidates *but* it refuses George Antheil with editorial circumlocution. And the meaning of this sentence will not be clear either to the Guggenheim committee or to the select American public for another five or ten years. The details change (Antheil will enter his native America via Frankfurt) but the fundamental equation remains the same.

The first support Antheil had in America, apart from the interest of Bloch and von Sternberg, came from ploot who insisted on his becoming a PYanist. That is perhaps typical, not only of Pennsylvania but of the whole damned and doddering anglosaxon coagulation in general; offered a composer they ask for a pyanist; offered a great master of design they ask for a pamphleteer or (at least in the case of P. Wyndham Lewis) the manifest hate and opposition only ceases and the enthusiastic reception only begins when the creative master makes a detour into pamphleteering; not that they understand the pamphlets but they get a phrase here and there and don't feel that

they are in the presence of something devastatingly more permanent than themselves and their particular cliché of inanity.

Whether any generally effective serum can be devised to cure this nastiness in our nation? That is to say: must we reread the life of Napoleon to discover his great discovery namely that: artillery to be effective must be aimed toward what you want to hit? I, alas, leave it to the reader.

A will to stimulate the arts is manifest in several American foundations; i.e., the money has been paid but this is ineffective, and will be, until more care is taken in examining the qualifications of the selecting committees. Certain mechanisms wd. be useful if . . . .

For instance, less than a million dollars wd. purchase an uptodate printing press and pay the annual salaries of three or four printers; and this press cd. be used to further communication between the intelligent or at least between the mentally alert citizens of the republic, IF the selection of matter to be printed were confided to a dozen men who had each, apart from personal talent, shown a capacity for discovery of, and interest in, some notable contemporary work save his own. These men wd. act independently of each other and NOT as a committee; they wd. each have the right of nominating one or two books, pamphlets; or fragments a year. The subsidy wd. not enable the foundation to undersell the "trade" but it wd. make the editors independent of immediate sales and provide contemporary (really contemporary) publications for the few hundred Americans who want them.

It might be noted that whole categories of European books simply do not exist in America. The whole category of critical writings; volumes of 150 to 250 pages sold for 50 or 60 cents in France and Germany is unknown in either America or England.

The island of Pelman produces (fifteen or thirty years late) a genre called "series," i.e., superficial sumaries of what has occurred in art or letters or science or some branch of same and sells it at 2 shillings and six pence; but this is aimed at the upper tiers of Daily Mail reader and is of no use to either writer or scientist.

The whole category of writers like Cocteau, Aragon, DeSchloezer, in fact the whole literate section of Europe that makes the advance reviews and sees its work immediately reprinted in handy cheap volumes is either nonextant in America or depends for inter-

communication on fortuitous "freak" publications; or is forced to back up its free speculation by a cannonade of scholasticism and in any case does not for at least a decade or two attain existence in book-form.

What accommodation has America for an Apollinaire; a Picabia, a Man Ray, or a Marcel Duchamp. Admitting that one or two of these gents occasionally visits Manhattan as an anonymous and diverted spectator.

Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the best of America (in the intellectual sense) may be concealed in college faculties, a country can not rely *wholly* for its mental life on a set of men constantly and almost exclusively in contact with younger men who know less than they do. Perhaps one professor in every 1500 survives. There must be a non-academic element in contemporary mental activity (and it should not be wholly ignorantist).

These cheap books which men write for their equals do not sell by the million or even by the ten thousand in France. Books of the same sort in our own tongue have been printed in France and England without fiscal disaster, though they do not permit any great "overhead." In America even books that are practically certain to pay their printing costs and a little over, are held up; there is the competition not of the worthless, but of the second-rate that will pay dividends. The publishers can't afford to wait for a slow return. The subsidizer is daft on putting steam heat into freshman dormitories. A good printing press probably costs no more than a single heating installation.

As for coöperation? a syndicat des intellectuels? as for any idea of the mentally alert cataloguing themselves, posting up a bulletin to the effect: We want to be informed when it happens. We are not the garment-workers but we have a few interests in common, or uncommon?

This, I suppose, lies outside the national genius. (There wd. also be the annual dues to deter people, 50 cents to five bucks per annum.)

EZRA POUND

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors
THE HOUND & HORN
Sirs:[1]

Sometime I wish you would ask your wise man, Mr. Hicks, to state his competence to decide what in a piece of writing is derived from Gurdjieff and what is not. On this matter he appears to follow the judgment of Mr. Cowley who "discovered" Gurdjieff in my book and in Mr. Toomer's piece. But Mr. Cowley's almost total ignorance of the Gurdjieff[2] system of ideas and his disposition to trust to his prejudices rather than to take the trouble to inform himself as to what the ideas are, are well known in New York. The man who sees in Mr. Toomer's Nathan Antrum a disciple of Gurdjieff plainly does not know what he is talking about. The point of Mr. Toomer's projected novel, *York Beach*, was precisely to show the struggle of a character to solve the problem of the individual and democracy *without* benefit of the Gurdjieff ideas. In view of this, I cherish no hope that even on the third time Mr. Hicks reviews *Style and Form*, he will be able correctly to specify the Gurdjieff elements in my alleged "melange of Babbitt, Orage and Gurdieff (sic)." As a matter of fact, I carefully excluded Gurdjieff elements, and what Mr. Hicks fames to be them is probably only ordinary common sense. If to a cocksure reader, the book appears to be a melange, he had better say Aristotle, Saintsbury, Orage and Behaviorism.

You understand, of course, that this letter is not entered in controversy with Mr. Hicks. But I presume that you, as editor, have some interest in the accuracy of your reviewing.

Faithfully yours,

GORHAM B. MUNSON

[1] *Balm in Gilead.* Review of the American Caravan by Granville Hicks. HOUND & HORN, Vol. III, No. 2.

[2] Mr. Cowley at least knows better than Mr. Hicks how to spell Gurdjieff.

To the Editors
THE HOUND & HORN
Sirs:[1]

The most recent influx to the stream of commentary on "Ulysses," Mr. S. Foster Damon's essay, "The Odyssey in Dublin" (HOUND & HORN, Fall, 1929), partakes in full measure of the ethical confusion of James Joyce's work. In his interpretation of "Ulysses," Mr. Damon does not suggest that Joyce's theory of Hamlet may be exotic, that there may be any incongruity in the use of Dante, that the Bloom-Christ representation may be the defaming of a great figure, or that the entire symbolism may be top-heavy and grotesque. Is it necessary to point out that Joyce is subjecting religious and literary ideas to the Procrustean bed of his own painfully difficult situation, and that he is unjustifiably treating his own struggles as the consummation of all significant effort in the occident? But Joyce's outlook seems not to be sufficiently robust to represent such grand and balanced comprehensiveness. For "Ulysses" is undoubtedly the work of a genius, but of a sadly unsound genius.

Throughout Mr. Damon's criticism and interpretation of "Ulysses" runs a disastrous fallacy, namely the failure to appreciate the intimate relation of the *whole* conduct and thought of an individual to the state of his "soul." It is startling to be told by Mr. Damon that Bloom is symbolic of Christ. In the same essay he can write that "Bloom is the complete misfit of all literature" (page 32). Some writers have described Bloom as "l'homme moyen sensuel." He performs kindnesses which anyone can testify to having experienced from such men. Yet it seems extravagant on this account to set up Bloom as the complete symbol of the Christ-like virtues. Mr. Damon contrasts the vices of Stephen, who is for him the personification of Satan, with the virtues of Bloom, which are unconvincingly represented as those of Christ. How then, under any intellectual dispensation at all, can he conclude that when Bloom "sees Stephen, he recognizes in him at once his ideal" (page 35). Christ recognizes Satan as his "ideal." Satan (Stephen) is seeking his father, Christ (Bloom). Christ and Satan meet at last and recognize each other as true father and son. And "the way of Satan and the way of Christ lead alike to

[1] *The Odyssey in Dublin.* By S. Foster Damon. THE HOUND & HORN, Vol. III, No. 2.

futility and despair" (page 38). Bloom does service not only for Christ but for Ulysses also: "Bloom is Ulysses, the wanderer, in search of his home, his wife, his son" (page 35). Stephen "incarnates all that Bloom wished his son to be" (page 35). "Paradise is the soul of Hell" (page 43). "When he is drunk and hungry, driven crazy by the phantom of his mother, and knocked senseless in the street, suddenly to his lips come fragments of the song [which he used to sing to his mother]; and we know that the real Stephen is among the deathless gods, singing to the mother from whom he has never been parted" (page 43).

Merely to state such a patent confusion of ideas is to expose their obvious falsity. The ramified symbolism and the incongruous collocation of ideas which Mr. Damon offers as a serious treatment of the problem of evil seems to give the impression of the existence of a mass of evil, but gives no adequate conception of the good which is to combat this evil. Perhaps it is this inadequacy which forces Mr. Damon to conclude that the struggle of good and evil is "futile."

Yours truly,

Louis Harap

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FROG WHO WOULD BE AN OX

THOMAS SERGEANT PERRY. *A Memoir. By John T. Morse, Jr. Boston and New York. Houghton Mifflin Company. The Riverside Press, Cambridge.* 1929. $3.50.

Selections from the Letters of THOMAS SERGEANT PERRY. *Edited with an introduction, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. New York. The Macmillan Company.* 1929. $3.00.

In 1887 the great-great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin, inventor of America; the grandson of Commodore Perry, victor of the Battle of Lake Erie; the nephew of Commodore Perry, hero of Japan; the brother-in-law of John LaFarge, the most humane American decorator; the husband of Lilla Cabot, the most robust painter of the Boston school, when he had attained to his forty-third year published an accurate and exhaustive work, though neither dull nor long, which is entitled *The Evolution of the Snob.* I have not read the book for fifteen years, yet it lives in my memory, and I take this to be in its favor. Ten years ago, when Van Wyck Brooks, referring to his correspondence with the man who introduced Russian literature to the English speaking world and Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* to the American public, asked me did I know him, I was able to reply only that I knew of him as the husband of his poetic, artistic wife. The knowledge of Brooks and my ignorance, each has its significance. John Addington Symonds wrote to Edmund Gosse "When you go to Boston, you will see Perry, one of the most bright-souled students of literature, the biggest *helluo liborum* in America. Salute him for me." In 1925 Perry wrote of himself "I, whose identity is lost so utterly that I receive letters addressed to Thomas Cabot, Esq., I, who have drunk so deep a draught from the chalice of ignominy, have been asked to send to an unknown

man — perhaps a fond, almost silent admirer — *my autograph.*"

There may be some formula in Physics for the dissipation of energy which would stand to the public and to his friends as a symbol for Thomas Sergeant Perry. A man in whom the natural forces of his ancestral heritage played about for more than eighty years, a man widely read and widely known, who knew much and wrote well, and yet a man who, after a good beginning in scholarly letters, permitted himself to be so embittered by the ill fortune which emanates from the evil genius of Harvard College that the spite and stupidity of others entered into him and paralyzed his will to the end that he lived for forty years half disgruntled, half content to be a fashionable crank, such a man is a subject for review, fit to the abilities of T. S. Eliot or Van Wyck Brooks. We are not given his letters to these masters of criticism. You are not given a review of him by one of his admirers and friends; but instead, a review by one who knew him not.

Oh, in one way, I knew him well. I know his Ka. For I feel that it was he, more even than his powerful intimates, who shaped and twisted, clipped and trained the espalliered tree under whose thinning shade I live, and from whose branches there still falls my native food. Boston, the silver Boston of after the Civil War, Boston, "the only tolerable place of residence on an entire continent" as Berenson, one of the great snobs of Europe, will tell you. The gentle people of Boston seen in Europe are seen to *go* with their surroundings, because, like the Europeans about them, they are Provincials whose value as a spectacle lies in being provincial.

The gentle people of Boston are well bred, as provincial Europeans are well bred. They are, if anything, better bred. Delightful in small things, they are distressing in big things. The arts and letters of their patronage are the vulgarest art and letters in the world. While common vulgarity, touching in its ignorance, is respectable for its courage, Bostonian vulgarity is experienced and timid. It is misleadingly called vulgar. I could make my meaning clearer if I could bring myself to call it cheap.

The medium in which such minds as Perry live is the philosophy of Pessimism — the philosophy to which every child attains when he thinks he has discovered that there is no Santa Claus, the philosophy which enables a grown man to write (1863) in a mock letter to a new-born girl "an account of the hollowness of all things and how

dolls are filled with sawdust," or in 1901, "One thing, don't get sad with life. It's depressing, but take it for granted that it is depressing and a fraud; and it is strange how much delight one gets from constantly seeing one's theories borne out by facts. It's the greatest consolation in the world, beyond money and beyond price." This narcotic spirituality differs from the consolation of seeing life as fraud in contrast to ideal act.

To this Pessimism was joined at times the familiar philosophy of an Evil Creation, the last decadence of Puritanism. "As fashionable" as Perry said, "as appendicitis," it cannot be made to have any bearing on sane action. So long as it remains joined to even fairly decent morals it cannot become anything but an affection of thought. It is the origin of slouth and its own origin lies in the faith of fear, the only faith that Perry had. Like all snobs and like most Bostonians, he looked out on life from behind a shell of fear. The fear of being made a fool made him appear daring sometimes as in 1888 after the Bayreuth Parsifal. Barrett Wendell mentions Perry's "expression of somewhat bored satisfaction with his own opinion."

If Morse or Robinson had troubled to collect the other side of Perry's correspondence, and if in this collection Mr., Mrs., and Miss Blank, the villains of all collected letters, did not appear, we "outsiders" as Perry called us, would have a first-rate exemplar of snobbism. But even as Benjamin Franklin was not, in Barrett Wendell's phrase, "technically a gentleman," so Perry himself, though he "always regarded society as an invention of stupid people to get the bright people to entertain them," was not a first-rate snob. He could not follow Henry James ("the best writer of his generation," 1908) in the last explorations of worldly mysteries. Just as in 1924, he bought a radio, so in 1914 he began to hate the Huns and to admire the Limeys. And we find him writing Solomon Reinach (in the opinion of John T. Morse, "perhaps the most distinguished among the learned men of Europe") that the *Life and Letters of Page* is a "more valuable book" than the *Education of Henry Adams*. Even as he reached his final height of snobbism in the enjoyment of the *Saturday Evening Post*, so the deepest meaning of the accurate statements which he liked to write to his historian friends has been better expressed by Henry Ford when he said, "History is bunk." No, Perry was not a great snob.

Scarcely comparable in any other way to my grandfather's first

cousin, Brooks Adams, like him, he suffered as a writer from training in the Law, which is apt to make one content with sensible reasons for things so that one lets the non-sensical reasons escape. Perry could not go to the limits of snobbism either in Culture, like Henry James, nor against Culture. He had the talent, but he dared not develop it. "Hitherto (1909) philosophy, like learning (and much painting and much music), has been literary, and life is not literary. Even literature is becoming unliterary — I stop because I am afraid I am simply incoherent." This is keen perception of a tendency which is called *Surrealism* today.

The fear that in order to do anything whatever one must be a little vulgar, makes one a little vulgar — that is to say — very cheap. The fear that in order to believe anything one must be a little stupid, makes one a little stupid — that is to say — very silly. The fear that if one betray at all that one is not completely paralyzed one may at any moment be thought too ridiculous, makes one at all times rather ridiculous.—That is to say — one has no sense of humor. I shall investigate these fears. There is a wealth of illustration of snobbism in these letters. I choose three. First, to illustrate the fear that to do anything is vulgar. Though Perry was almost taken in by Pragmatism, still (possibly because it is more vulgar than cheap) he only got as far as the cheapest part, the first stages of initiation. He says in (1910) speaking of years gone by "As for William James' philosophy, it is the only one I could ever have any patience with, because he kicked down stairs and out of the house the whole bunch of long-winded, psalm-singing, self-praising philosophers." This skirmish of revolt led to the exact opposite of a real discovery: In 1902 he wrote to William James: "The desire of everything that seems to be established is to establish itself more firmly to petrify itself and dull innovation." The truth is, of course, that nothing can remain established that is not constantly renewed, but Perry was doing pretty well for a "sophisticated" person and might have gone on further, but, alas, he was the husband of his poetic wife and had Robinson, Carman, Hovey and McLane for his poetic friends, so we find him in 1919 living not far from "aristocratic Dublin," N. H., warmed with satisfaction that the London Atheneum dared to say this of our modern Sappho: "We know a good deal of Miss L., who has long been a familiar figure in the anthologies of revolt; Miss L. is, we are persuaded, a negligible poet, with a

tenuous and common-place impulse to write, which she teases out into stupid 'originalities.' Is not the paper full of international hatred and of jealousy? There can be no other explanation." A little of this common-place urge to write would have done Perry himself no harm. And what was it that had happened after seventeen years that a disturbance once permitted in Philosophy could not be permitted in Poetry? The fear of vulgarity became a faith.

One can scarcely over-emphasize, while considering the relation between snobbism and aesthetics and blind stupidity, such a bit coming from the husband of an artistic wife, the brother-in-law of John LaFarge, a friend of Mrs. Gardner (— so "pleasant" when she "did not talk about the Boston Art Museum"—), Dr. Sturgis Bigelow, the whole Giverney school, Monet, Rodin, Pissaro ("and our distinguished Tarbell") during a period of academic residence in Japan.

"Here I live like persons in the New Testament — I regret to say that I refer, principally, to those gentlemen who seem to have been under a cloud when that very popular book was written — I clap my hands and cringing people appear, or don't appear, just as it happens, but more important are many things we don't get hold of, or a sight of here: *books and pictures.*" The Italics are Perry's own! So there are no pictures in Japan! So "Shinto music is not to be distinguished from cat calls." So "one of the weak points of Japanese civilization is that they cannot distinguish between the real and the imitation brands of champagne." So "the Japs won't be a truly civilized race until they correct his fundamental error of serving first the game with salad, and after it, the roast!" Perry presents a contrast to Lafcadio Hearn, who also taught English in Japan.

As Perry said, 1915, "It is really just as hard to be wise after the event as before." So, though he distrusted alike Democrats and Republicans all his life, he admired Theodore Roosevelt II, and though he was chic enough to make Jewish friends during the Dreyfus affair, he was later glad that "Pogroms are fashionable in Poland" and, though a student of Russian literature, "when poor, old, absurd Russia fell flat," he wrote to Reinach, 1917, "Let us be thankful that Leo Tolstoy is not alive to preach brotherly love" and he prophesied that "the future of the world depends on the miscarriage of the Revolution." All this is very silly.

The ill-considered tirades a good American takes to be the conven-

tional sign of his political health, even when these vilifications of the President and entire Body Politic are addressed to influential persons in foreign lands, are not often enlivened by such bits as this about President Wilson and his *tactlessness* to Mrs. Perry's cousin, Cabot Lodge: "He is an autocrat, or he would at times relax and send a flower to his enemies. With tact much can be done with very slight expense; but no!" There is a subject of a cartoon for you, Mr. Max Beerbohm; Woodrow Wilson relaxing and giving Cabot Lodge a flower (1919).

No, Perry had no sense of humor. He had wit. In 1925 he found as he read *South Wind* that he felt once more what he called a wise smile. This "wise smile" is the small *u* of Voltaire and Leo XIII, not the big *O* of Cervantes and Rabelais. He writes from Japan, 1898, "I think the eighteenth-century prose writers save Addison" (Addison not Sterne), "have been over-praised." "How rare is humor. It's a good deal rarer than poetry. . . Dooly is delightful . . . you can't imagine how rare it is to get hold of anything to read out here." How about the Chinese poets? But they were not quite in fashion, and Perry was homesick.

Perry's talents were such as to make him a distinguished provincial citizen. The wise things in his letters deal with local Bostonian matters. Of "that patriot, Henry Lee Higginson" and his project for dumping islands in the Charles River Basin, he asks, 1916, "Why is it that there are some men who can't see a body of water without wanting to litter it up with islands, just as their mates can't see a big tree without wanting to cut it down?" And in 1900, while performing his most important work in life, the reading of books for the Boston Public Library, when the Trustees were about to disperse their medical collections, he wrote: "It seems to me the duty of a library to collect, not to scatter, books; but I am well known to be cantankerous and unreasonable."

If he had been content to address his own small world quietly, he would have been an instrument of wisdom. But he dissipated his mind by calling out to the great public whom his friends commanded. And in raising his voice, he committed his name to the very thinnest and most pretentious *stuff* — most of which he did not really mean. Culture-Philistines, Pharasees and Snobs never say what they really mean.

His friends were unfair to him in accusing him of being a lazy man. Like the type literary gentleman, he learned English, French, German, Russian, Greek, Latin and Sanskrit, and then when he was all through, Perry found he had nothing to say. But with his wide and powerful connections, his industry in telling people what he thought they ought to dislike, his negative zeal, Perry secured for himself a sort of Fame. He inspired a responsive cult of praise and deference among hundreds of people just like himself. (Reinach "often quoted [Perry] as an example of the hellenised American so completely different from the types one most often meets over here.") From such people, as from a sour soil, it is inconceivable that any growth with roots and branches, leaves, flower and fruit should spring.

But Boston is not as Perry said it was "merely a decaying town, like Salem." The country at large, the whole United States (I speak not of New York, which is a market, a port of entry for the dreams of Europe, and not properly of this country) may find itself becoming Bostonian if enough people give themselves time to begin to try to think. It is bound to become so unless it rid itself of every lingering symptom of decadent Puritanism. Then if the country created by Benjamin Franklin suffer, like Benjamin Franklin's great-great-grandson, overwhelming reverses of ill fortune, unless it ground its roots much deeper than at present into the dark, moist narrow deeps which cleave the underlying strata of the rock beneath all rock, it will fall into a supercilious, if self tormented, relapse of the creative spirit.

JOHN BROOKS WHEELWRIGHT

MODERN ARCHITECTURE

MODERN ARCHITECTURE. *By Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr. New York. Payson and Clarke, Ltd.* 1929. $5.00.

In *Modern Architecture* Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., establishes himself as very possibly the foremost living historian of his subject. American books on modern architecture, with the exception of Lewis Mumford's, have been as provincial, as ill-informed, as complacent and as reactionary as are most American architects and American schools of architecture. This book is not.

Modern Architecture sub-titled Romanticism and Reintegration is divided into three sections.

In Part One, the Age of Romanticism, brilliantly, somewhat at times in the manner of Sacheverell Sitwell but more seriously, Mr. Hitchcock lists architects, buildings, publications which mark the last years of the Baroque and Rococo and the development of the architecture which followed, from 1750 through the confusion of the 19th century. The Neo-classic revival of the Roman and Greek, and the antiquarian revival of Medieval architecture, bitterly opposite as they once were, are both seen as essentially and almost equally romantic. He clarifies the influence upon architecture of the painters, engravers, and lithographers of ruins and romantic landscape, of the cults of the "sublime" and the "picturesque." He describes the rise of steel construction and the divorce of engineering from architecture. Though entertaining as a problem in criticism the "Gothick" architects are justly ranked as unimportant. The work of the classicists, Sir John Soane and Friedrich Schinckel, of the engineer-architects, Labrouste and Hittorf, is seen to be valuable both intrinsically and as anticipating the transitional problems of the early 20th century. The disintegration of architecture through the development of an eclecticism of taste describes the actual condition of American building even in our own time. For there is no essential difference between the "neo-Gingerbread" bracket of the Garfield mansion and the pseudo-Gothic or pseudo-Maya cosmetics upon skyscrapers of 1930.

Part Two is devoted to the architecture which the author calls not

too happily of the New Tradition, a style developed from the integration of old with new and modern forms, rather than from the imitation of past periods. Two Americans, H. H. Richardson and Frank Lloyd Wright, were leaders — the latter influencing most importantly the work of European masters such as Berlage of Amsterdam. Richardson's independence of the Romanesque with which he is usually associated is ably declared, as is Wright's inability even at the present time to disentangle his architecture from his romantic theories. The decadence of the New Tradition is seen in the buildings for the Paris Exposition of 1925, its continued vigor in the work of such men as Dudok in Holland, and the Viennese Hoffmann, though the severity of their recent designs is obviously influenced by a still more modern movement.

To this more recent movement called by Mr. Hitchcock that of the "New Pioneers" the third and most important part of his book is devoted. The New Tradition is comparable genetically to such essentially derivative styles as the Renaissance and Baroque, but the style of the New Pioneers seems more original even than the Byzantine or Gothic, and has been far more abruptly and self-consciously created. For the New Pioneers a house is a machine in which one lives. Positively, they insist that the design of the facade is a function of the interior, that the interior should be conceived as volumes limited by planes rather than as the arrangement of masses, and that the whole should be a composition of elements primarily utilitarian and structural. The role of the architect should be that of an engineer who, with the judgment of an artist, chooses among several equally adequate solutions of a utilitarian problem that which is aesthetically the most satisfactory. Negatively, the New Pioneers shun all decoration and whenever possible all forms and materials reminiscent of previous styles.

Le Corbusier is the leading theorist and controversialist of the movement but his architecture, though brilliant and original, is frequently inefficient as *machine à habiter*. Walter Gropius preceded Corbusier by many years in actual building and remains the leading New Pioneer in Germany. J. J. P. Oud of Rotterdam Mr. Hitchcock considers to be perhaps the soundest architect of the movement, though both France and Holland are less advanced than Germany in the general acceptance of the new style.

With the exception of two pre-war industrial buildings by Gropius

the work of the New Pioneers falls almost entirely within the last decade. In spite of this their ideas have spread with amazing rapidity. Even in conservative England and Scandinavia, progressive younger architects are turning away from the New Tradition, though America as usual, is far behind. So far as the reviewer knows there is only one New Pioneer building east of the Rockies, a school by Howe and Lescaze, near Philadelphia. California is decidedly more adventurous. Probably other young American architects will follow in the footsteps of Peter van der Meulen Smith, to whom *Modern Architecture* is dedicated and whose death in 1928 deprived America of its first American born New Pioneer. But it is difficult to agree with Mr. Hitchcock's suggestion that America is already next in importance to Germany, France, and Holland in the "development of a new architecture." Certainly Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, the U. S. S. R. and Switzerland are far ahead of the United States in accepting and understanding the principles of the New Pioneers.

As a historian Mr. Hitchcock is more than adequately learned, precise, and admirably synthetic. His bold division of modern architecture since 1750 into three parts, each awarded approximately equal attention, is convincing even though the third part is confined to the last ten years. Especially masterly are his short biographies of individual architects, often completely contradicting conventional estimates of their work. His heroes are Soane and Richardson and Oud, but he is never insistent. At times his method and ideology seem too erudite for the ordinary reader, but his intention is obviously neither that of the sciolist nor the evangelist.

Indeed, Mr. Hitchcock's restraint surprises one a little as he has in the past stooped occasionally to controversy. Even in praising Le Corbusier or condemning Ralph Adams Cram, his discriminating mildness is most persuasive. But his caution in his last chapter, *The Architecture of the Future* — 1929, is a little disappointing. At the end of the section on Romanticism he makes brilliant use of an essay by G. G. Scott upon exactly the same subject but published in 1857. Scott's pages are rich with enthusiasm. He dares greatly with true Victorian confidence and is as often right as wrong. By comparison Mr. Hitchcock's prophecies seem meager, dissipated by a rather conscious Spenglerian melancholy. He is satisfied that the New Pioneers have indeed effected a reintegration of utilitarian with aesthetic purpose, more com-

plete even than the Gothic. But one feels that even he is somewhat disturbed by the puritanical austerity of this new style, born in a very literal sense as a *deus ex machina*. Yet he offers us little comfort by suggesting that the greatest architects of the new style are already at work and that "except for him who succeeds at last in creating the architecture of the skyscraper it is not likely that architects will for some time have the opportunities for creation that Le Corbusier, Oud, Gropius, and certain others have already had."

The reviewer would like to suggest somewhat timidly that the problem of future architects is nevertheless the development of ornament. He is at one with Mr. Hitchcock in feeling that any contemporary architectural ornament is intolerable, and that our present period of "sterilization" was inevitable. Yet he is tempted to propose that the ornament of the future will derive not from geometry, nor from modern painting, nor from any of the other sources of "modernist" decoration, but rather from mechanical devises such as steam radiators, electric bulbs, hydrants, mailing chutes, radio dials, electric fans, neon tubes. These objects are at present merely utilitarian but already it is fashionable to consider them ornamental. The Gothic arch was for several decades used only for a structural purpose though it became eventually the fundamental motive of Gothic ornament. The analogue is not exact, yet a future ornament of "gadgetry" seems not improbable.

The reviewer is so heartily in sympathy with Mr. Hitchcock's ideas that possible errors in his book seem minor. It is regrettable that more analytical attention should not have been given to Gropius' work at Dessau. The Bauhaus building remains the most imposing single achievement of the New Pioneers, and the director's house at Dessau of 1926 seems superior technically, and at least equal aesthetically to any structure of Le Corbusier's previous to that date. Erich Mendelsohn should not have been dismissed with merely casual reference. His reputation both in Germany and America is so great that he should at least have been awarded a more critical damnation. It is unfortunate, too, that the thankless problem of the skyscraper about which there is so much chauvinistic sentiment should not have been clarified. And lastly, the author's style is perhaps a little too much influenced by the German, and his spelling by the French: "-ism" is, after all, preferable in English to "-isme," and "neo" to "néo." But these idiosyncra-

sies are to be pardoned one whose first and second names have suffered voluntary post-baptismal hyphenation.

The typography and composition of *Modern Architecture* is pretentious but scarcely successful. The title-page, bastard titles, dedication and chapter headings are in sans-serif capitals, the rest of the text in serif type, a mixture especially unhappy in a book of decidedly permanent value. The margins of the text are luxurious though badly proportioned; those around the halftones extravagant; but that of the title-page is a miserly quarter of an inch. And in spite of the fact that the type is unpleasantly small, much space is wasted by separating the paragraphs by blank lines, rather than by indentations, in order apparently to achieve an even outer alignment.

One is tempted also to find fault with the illustrations which seem parsimonious. But the quality of the halftones is adequate and their size would be tolerable if only there were more. The text is worthy of at least three times the number of illustrations, especially as the author's choice of photographs is obviously hampered by what was doubtless a necessary economy on the part of his publishers. Perhaps the successors to Payson and Clarke will publish a really sufficient corpus of plates, selected and annotated by Mr. Hitchcock.

These physical shortcomings do not modify the fact that *Modern Architecture* is a scholarly and critical achievement of the greatest originality and distinction. Unfortunately this will be more thoroughly appreciated in Europe than in America.

ALFRED H. BARR, JR.

STUDY OF HAWTHORNE

HAWTHORNE. *By Newton Arvin. Boston. Little, Brown & Co.* 1929. $3.50.

Mr. Arvin seems to have added nothing to what was already known about Hawthorne's life. His solitude, and its numbing effects on his work had already been sufficiently brought out, for instance by Lloyd Morris in *The Rebellious Puritan* and Herbert Gorman in *Hawthorne, A Study in Solitude.* Mr. Arvin's own selections from his journals told the story as clearly as necessary. One would like to know more about his relations with his wife as they developed over a period of twenty years or so. For a man with so few important contacts this relation should be of the utmost significance. Mr. Arvin has shed no new light on its apparent failure. (The journals seem to show that only the first years of married life marked a break in Hawthorne's terrified isolation.)

The importance of the book lies in Mr. Arvin's effort to determine with some finality Hawthorne's place in American letters. His analysis of *The Scarlet Letter, The Blithedale Romance,* and the *House of Seven Gables* is very acute. He points out that although Hawthorne seldom realized his fables in the round, seldom created figures with a convincing independent life of their own like a Tolstoy or a Balzac, he often invented myths of eternal, though limited significance. His theme is one aspect of the American centrifugal individualism. He studies the maleficent effects of isolation, which he usually connects with sin. The allegories which he constructs to illustrate this theme have a necessity and a truth independent of the characters that act them out: he possessed a significant vision of American life even though he did not quite succeed in realizing it in a novelist's terms. For Hawthorne's work up to the time he went to Europe, this diagnosis is quite satisfying. But there are two points where one might question Mr. Arvin's conclusions. The first is the highly debatable question of the reasons for Hawthorne's limitations; the second is his estimate of the importance of the work which followed his trip to Europe.

Mr. Arvin is disposed to attribute both the poverty of Hawthorne's

range of subjects and his failure to realize them in the round, to the effects of his meager environment on the man. He points out that Hawthorne was never able to find a fertile adjustment to the world of action. This limited the range of his sympathies and compelled him to choose his subjects among people more or less like himself. I have no doubt there is some truth in this. The man was undoubtedly stunted by his environment. But it may be questioned whether a poet has to share the experiences of the types he pictures, and therefore whether his failure as a poet is entirely due to his personal limitations. A poet must see his subjects as significant; but if he cannot find significant individuals among his contemporaries that is not necessarily his fault. They may actually *be* insignificant. Anyone who reads Hawthorne's account of the Customs House at Salem will be convinced that Hawthorne saw the New Englanders of his day clearly enough. He had plenty of porters and grave-diggers and Malvolios ready to his hand, but no Macbeths and only a few rather shop-worn Hamlets. He could not like Sinclair Lewis make his Malvolios carry the main burden of his vision. Like many another nineteenth-century author it was as though he had a vision with no contemporary relevance and no contemporary embodiments. Mr. Arvin does not sufficiently show how a rootless society may have stunted the poet independently of its effects on the man.

It is this which keeps Mr. Arvin from seeing the full importance of Hawthorne's experience in Europe. He sees Europe as completing the estrangement of Hawthorne which had been begun in Massachusetts. He considers unimportant the unfinished romance, *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret,* because of its melodramatic machinery and the unreal dilemmas of its characters. To estimate this work on these terms is to be too moralistic; for the change brought about by Europe was not a change in Hawthorne's character, but a change in what he *saw*. Behind *Dr. Grimshawe* there is a *vision* of the greatest importance: a vision of the difference between Old England and New England. In getting that down as well as he could, Hawthorne displayed the heroism proper to the artist, which consists in a fidelity to what he sees. Henry James was to take up this work where Hawthorne left it off, and T. S. Eliot where Henry James left off. We are still trying to digest some of the things Hawthorne saw after his sojourn in Europe. Hawthorne gained a direct and uninterpreted perception of a society. Mr. Arvin has been

more interested in the ethical problems of Hawthorne and his characters. He has not digested Henry James's remark that Hawthorne had nothing to write about in a society with "No state in the European sense of the word . . . no sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army . . . — no Epsom nor Ascot." It is significant that Henry James should have mentioned the races in the same breath as Church and State. It indicates his gift, which he to some extent shared with Hawthorne, for concrete and unmetaphysical awareness.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

VALOR AND GLORY

THE SENSE OF GLORY. *By Herbert Read. New York. Harcourt Brace & Company.* 1929. $3.00.

Mr. Read in his latest book evinces a discontent prevalent in certain circles with the world of our times. This discontent can hardly be said to supply an emotional background for his book. It is by no means a spring-board from which the author precipitates himself into the reflections embodied in these essays on Froissart, Descartes, Vauvenargues, Henry James and others. The impetus to his reflections has never the character or force of an emotional impulse. But Mr. Read's discontent is apparent and it is significant because it is most apparent where he has addressed himself, or is about to address himself, to what has given his book its title, the sense of glory.

"The world in 1715," Mr. Read observes, "seemed as empty as it did in 1915, and continued to be empty during Vauvenargues' life as it continues in ours — empty of grace, of faith, of fervor and magnanimity." In the early twentieth as in the early eighteenth-century reaction, according to Mr. Read, has taken the shape of resignation and despair. In both of these epochs the sense of glory is wanting. "We have lost the sense of glory," so concludes the essay on Froissart, "because we have lost the habit of faith. We neither love deeply enough, nor think deeply enough, nor feel deeply enough to enjoy life's most impressive sanction." And it is generally in connection with reflections of this nature that Mr. Read introduces the idea of the sense of glory.

But before we examine this sense of glory it will be well to consider the criticism contained in Mr. Read's book as a whole because this criticism cannot be discussed without difficulty and with justice to itself on the basis merely of the idea of the sense of glory. Its merits are a gift of very fine analysis, a wide and interesting range of reference from books and, though less consistently, a command of lucid exposition. These merits are everywhere apparent in Mr. Read's essays but especially so, we think, in the admirable essays on Descartes, Sterne, and Henry James. They are easily enumerated and these merits are of a kind that does not require an elaborate statement. But we would say of them emphatically before passing to what appears the

deficiency of Mr. Read's criticism that although they are easily set down they are far less easily overestimated.

Mr. Read's criticism, on the other hand, lacks cogency. It lacks that particular kind of cogency that is a sign of a proper integration of knowledge with experience. He lacks, we think, the identical thing that he admires in Vauvenargues in whose life the fusion of reading and experience is clearly indicated by Mr. Read. And the same circumstance is at the bottom of what he admires in Bagehot and what he describes in words that Bagehot used of Béranger: "He puts things together; he refers things to a principle; rather they group themselves insensibly round a principle." In other words Mr. Read admires in Bagehot an organization depending on a center of gravity; and a center of gravity, we feel, is an essential of effective thinking. Personal experience is not the original or the final sanction but it is the sanction that makes a principle operative on the intellectual and moral levels, and operative precisely as a center of gravity. It is such a principle that we do not find in Mr. Read's criticism and its absence is emphasized by an unrestrained use of his strong analytical faculty which gives to his work an air of anxious intellectuality. It is more essentially marked by a failure to come to his main point decisively and as if inevitably. There is no force of conviction, no force even of an impelling understanding of his subject, in the way Mr. Read advances his idea of the sense of glory.

Yet it required temerity to bring forward this idea at all in the face of a generation which largely feels with the hero of Ernest Hemingway's last novel that words like victory, heroism, glory, etc., have become impotent and indecent. And we shall try to follow as carefully as possible Mr. Read's presentation of the idea by a number of quotations which we introduce with the observation that in the house of glory, as we gather in the course of Mr. Read's essays, there are many mansions. There are at once sanctuaries and *places d'armes*. "Froissart's pages," we read, "are vivid with a personal radiance of men who achieve glory." Again we are told that our age "with so few illusions, with such poor outlet for emotion and reverence, cannot afford to be either indifferent or ignorant, and must in the end go to Malory and his like to recover certain necessary virtues" — the virtues which are included in the sentiment of glory. But Mr. Read continues: "That glory has no necessary connection with war is clear after a

moment's reflection; for martial glory is not an essential glory, and we must still distinguish glory with grace — as in Wolfe and Nelson — from glory with pride—as in Alexander and Napoleon." Thus are we introduced into an inner region of glory. And we proceed further when Mr. Read quotes Vauvenargues' *Discours sur la Gloire*, a work which he pronounces to express "the noblest attitude of mind" and of which the essential argument is "that glory and virtue are interdependent; one cannot exist without the other."

In the first essays in his book Mr. Read quotes Vauvenargues to an extent that would ascribe a preëminence in this man among those who have enjoyed the sense of glory. But in the essay on Vauvenargues itself he writes: "True glory is a private and discreet virtue, and is only realized in solitariness. It is not Vauvenargues, but Traherne in his *Centuries of Meditations*, who has given us the true definition of glory. . . . . Perhaps the difference between Traherne and Vauvenargues in this respect is that Vauvenargues, like Malory before him and in common with the whole tradition of chivalry, saw in glory a reflection of the esteem of other men; whereas Traherne, more profoundly, found glory not in the active pursuit of worship but in the quiet possession of the objective world." Here then we are in the sanctuary; and in this last phrase Mr. Read has said a good deal. He has come close to saying what probably never can be said no matter how often and how variously it has been expressed. But has he not come circuitously to this inner sanctuary of the sense of glory? Surely there is a more direct, a more inevitable approach to it, and one, fortunately, with more instant appeal for the world today than by way of Froissart, Malory and even Vauvenargues, admirable as they are. For glory with them, as Mr. Read acknowledges, includes something too much of physical valor and the glamor of arms. And these are associated with military grandeur which in Mr. Read's own words has spoilt and discredited glory in our time, and they are not at the heart of the matter. But "the quiet possession of the objective world" finds a far less qualified expression in much of the world's greatest poetry. It is simply the recognition of spiritual fact in the integrity of the universe. For us it is the realization:

> The angels keep their ancient places; —
> Turn but a stone and start a wing.

W. E. Sedgwick

ELIOT ON DANTE

DANTE. *By T. S. Eliot. London. Faber & Faber.* 1929. 3s. 6d.

This is the least pretentious book that Mr. Eliot has written. In its sixty-eight pages he has attempted, he says, only to give an account of his acquaintance with Dante. If that were indeed all, reading this book would be of some profit. A poet showing us how he reads poetry is an infrequent sight and one sufficient to sharpen our own sensibilities. As a matter of fact, Mr. Eliot has gone further. He has taken the role, not of professor, but of tutor of literature and has given us advice not only about the mechanics of the subject but also about the difficulties we must clear from our path.

He is not, however, attempting anything like an "introduction to Dante" and questions such as the debt of Dante to St. Thomas Aquinas interest him not at all for the present. Even if this is the least pretentious and perhaps the least provocative and interesting of Mr. Eliot's books, it is still of value to a generation all too prone to leave Dante in the limbo of great reputations.

Concerning mechanical questions, Mr. Eliot is confident that Dante can be enjoyed, not fully perhaps, but adequately, even if one's equipment is as small as his own: "a public school knowledge of Latin, a traveller's smattering of Italian, and a literal translation beside the text." He gives advice about translations, is insistent that the *Divine Comedy* be read as a whole and before the *Vita Nuova*, and suggests further readings. He begins with suggestions about the beauties of details, individual passages of the *Inferno*; and passes on to more general considerations about the whole poem when he discusses the *Paradiso*.

More important than this technical advice is the *apologia* that is implicit in Mr. Eliot's book, his justification of his belief in "the importance of Dante as a master — I might even say *the* master — for a poet writing today in any language."

There are three items in this justification. First, Dante is the universal school of style for poets. The imitation of Dante will do the young writer less harm than that of any other poet. The young poet

will learn from the *Inferno* that "the greatest poetry can be written with the greatest economy of words, and with the greatest austerity in the use of metaphor, simile, verbal beauty, and elegance." As an instance of this, Mr. Eliot cites several similes which, he points out, are intensive not expansive, as, in two different ways, those of Homer and Shakespeare are. Consequently the first reading of Dante always results in clear if not full understanding. This "universal" style comes from two facts: first, that Dante's Italian is very close to mediaeval Latin which was an international medium of communication; secondly, that Dante's Europe was mentally more united than we can now conceive. The first of these two points is true and interesting, neither before nor after Dante was there a poet whose medium was not conditioned by local or personal peculiarities. After Latin became an international language, about 50 A.D. when men from the provinces were beginning to write literature, it produced no great poet. The nearest approximation to Dante's universal medium in classical times was, one might say, the prose of Seneca. The second point that Mr. Eliot makes is true, doubtless, but one feels that his frequent preoccupation with religious and political questions — not otherwise noticeable in this book — has caused the appearance of a small red herring. At least it seems that young poets are being counselled to imitate a poet whom, *a priori*, they cannot imitate.

Mr. Eliot's second justification for the study of Dante is closely connected with the first. Just as Dante used a language which was close to an universal language, so he used a method of expression, that is, allegory, which was universally comprehended. Mr. Eliot is aware that allegory is not understood or liked just now; he has something interesting to say about its advantages for the writing of poetry. "For a competent poet, allegory means clear visual images," and those images gain intensity by having a meaning to back them. Dante's visual imagination was of an age which saw visions. And here Mr. Eliot stresses the fact that allegory is not a romantic nor a private device: "Speech varies, but our eyes are all the same."

The third justification is twofold: the *Purgatorio* shows that philosophical statement can be great poetry and the *Paradiso* shows that states of beatitude can be the stuff of poetry. Here Mr. Eliot has added nothing to what he has already said in his essay on Dante in *The Sacred Wood*. But he has become more the teacher, and by

pointing out the romantic partiality for suffering (Shelley's "sweetest songs") and the difference between Victorian optimism and Dante's conceptions of improvement and beatitude he has assisted us to get rid of what are merely temporary prejudices.

This same accuracy of historical sense is shown in the chapter on the *Vita Nuova*. Although Mr. Eliot does not say as much here as he has elsewhere (particularly in the essay comparing Dante with Donne which appeared in a volume of the *Roseau d'Or* series) he does indicate two difficulties which impede our true appreciation of that work. Ours is an age which approaches the *Vita Nuova* with the expectation of something like a "confession." Influenced by Rousseau we are interested in "personalities" — provided that they are indiscreet. This nose for gossip prevents our being able to think ourselves into an age when people were really concerned with the salvation of souls. Also our age is one which finds more meaning in origins than in final causes. We see more significance in what Dante may have felt when he first saw Beatrice than in what was for Dante the final cause of his love: the attraction towards God.

The importance of this book as far as Mr. Eliot is concerned is that it shows him more definitely anti-romantic in his tastes than before, if only by reason of his emphatic adherence to the criterion of universality. Its importance for Dante is — considering what Mr. Eliot himself has written previously — *nil*. For the person who has not read Dante — and he is the sole objective of the book — it is an excellent *vademecum*. One hopes that the rest of the series (one other has appeared: Miss Sackville-West on Marvell) will be as good. The idea of poets writing about poets is excellent, but the announcement of Mr. Humbert Wolfe on Tennyson is not inviting. The nineteenth century does not need exhumation; it would be more profitable, for instance, to read Mr. Robert Frost on Vergil.

LAWRENCE LEIGHTON

TWO ASPECTS OF TELEMACHUS

THE SOUND AND THE FURY. *By William Faulkner. New York. Cape and Smith.* 1930. $2.50.

LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL. *By Thomas Wolfe. New York. Scribner's.* 1929. $2.50.

Both of these novels deal with the South, the theme of both is the decadence of a family, and both are unusually rhetorical. *The Sound and the Fury* treats imbecility, incest, alcoholism, and insanity; it is almost unreadable. The vices celebrated in *Look Homeward, Angel* are less extravagant, though no less pernicious; the book is perhaps too readable. In each case, the striking characteristic is the style. The books are really not novels, but declamations. The effects are emotional, not cerebral. Mr. Faulkner and Mr. Wolfe are poets, and they write in the manner of poets.

The Sound and the Fury is the story of a degenerate Mississippi family, dropped piecemeal from the minds of the agonists. The book begins in the chaotic brain of Benjy, a man of thirty, a mute whose mind has never developed. For ninety delirious pages the story unfolds in the disordered consciousness of an idiot. Benjy lacks time-sense, and is incapable of relating impressions; Benjy lacks judgment, and cannot distinguish between significant and insignificant, actual, remembered, and imaginary; and, of course, Benjy's mind-words are the mind-words of a child. It is through this medium that Mr. Faulkner has chosen to introduce his characters, sketch the necessary background, and supply us with tags and motives for the ensuing narrative. He has been courageous, but I question the practicability of his device. The deliberate obscurity of the opening pages repels rather than invites; and when the reader perseveres, he struggles out at the other end of Benjy's maunderings with no clearer an idea of what has happened, or may be expected to happen, than he had when he entered.[1] Once this section is traversed, however, the going is easier.

[1] I can speak only for myself, of course. Nevertheless, armed though I was with eagerness and the best of will, I tried four times to finish the first section,

There is still considerable incoherence: Mr. Faulkner is fond of the psychological throwback and the technic perfected in the Gæa episode of *Ulysses;* but in spite of these interruptions the story marches on vigorously and intelligibly. By the time he has reached the last pages, the reader is somewhat astonished to discover that he is being held by the force of narrative alone; and even more astonished when he realizes that the narrative is straight from the old school of melodrama — nothing more nor less than the pursuit-on-wheels of eloping lovers. And this after so much agony in stony places! Almost what the movie-blurbs would call "a gripping story." Especially in the last pages, once the stylistic surface has been penetrated, the scenario atmosphere is unmistakable; and looking back, the reader recovers and reaffirms a suspicion which was always felt: that the men and women of *The Sound and the Fury* are not real men and women at all, but dramatic clichés for all their individuality of vice and action. Only the idiot Benjy is realized; Caddy and Quentin and Dilsey and Miss Caroline and Jason are melodrama types.

The style, then. It is the study of Mr. Faulkner's style, the consideration of the book as a rhetorical exercise, as a declamation, that repays the reader. Joyce is the ultimate source, obviously; but the joycean technic has been pretty thoroughly absorbed, integrated with the author's sensibility. Much of the time the writing is on two or more concurrent planes; and Mr. Faulkner's skill in avoiding the clash, while preserving the identity, of each tone is noteworthy. A typical passage (not, by the way, from the idiot's stream-of-consciousness) illustrates his method admirably:

"and Gerald's grandfather always picked his own mint before breakfast. while the dew was still on it. He wouldnt even let old Wilkie touch it do you remember Gerald but always gathered it himself and made his own julep. He was as crochety about his julep as an old maid, measuring everything by a recipe in his head. There was only one man he ever gave that recipe to; that was" *we did how can you not know it if youll just wait I'll tell you how it was it was a crime we did a terrible crime it cannot be hid you think it can but wait Poor Quentin youve never done that have you and I'll tell you how it was I'll tell*

and each time either fell asleep or started gnawing at the wallpaper after ten pages. It was at dawn on S. Swithin's that I finally arrived at what I think is the solution: let the reader start the book at page 93, putting off the introduction until the end. In this way he will not only reassemble the chronology of the narrative, but, thoroughly acquainted with most of the characters, he will better appreciate the significance of Benjy's meditations. In the event of a reprinting I recommend this arrangement. — D. F.

Father then itll have to be because you love Father then we'll have to go away amid the pointing and the horror the clean flame I'll make you say we did I'm stronger than you I'll make you know we did you thought it was them but it was me listen I fooled you all the time it was me you thought I was in the house where that damn honeysuckle trying not to think the swing the cedars the secret surges the breathing locked drinking the wild breath the yes Yes Yes yes "never be got to drink wine himself, but he always said that a hamper what book did you read that in where Geralds rowing suit of wine was a necessary part of any gentleman's picnic basket" *did you love them Caddy did you love them When they touched me I died*

While this is by no means an original technic, it is nevertheless beautifully employed. The diction is generally natural (although I suspect a certain stagey cleverness in the interjection of "what book . . . rowing suit" into the progressing statement "he always said that a hamper of wine was necessary": it is improbable that two voices would combine so happily as to result in the amusing "Geralds rowing suit of wine"); the expression of the subjective stream is balanced, rhythmic, intense, and at the same time lacking in affectation. The prose owes a great deal to Joyce—possibly too much;[2] but the individual impetus of Mr. Faulkner's sensibility is unmistakable.

The Sound and the Fury is an experiment in prose atonality, and, as such, is memorable. *Look Homeward, Angel* is at once less experimental and more effective. It is, no less than Mr. Faulkner's book, a rhetorical *tour de force;* only here (and not wholly because the rhetoric is recognizably of the established tradition), the impact upon the reader is stronger. This is partly due to the fact that Mr. Wolfe has been far more successful than Mr. Faulkner in the realization of his characters. Eugene and his brother, Ben, are first of all real persons; after that they may be types, symbols, or what you will. The narrative, too, is less lurid, less melodramatic, than that of *The Sound and the Fury*. The subject is the inevitable first-novel subject: Myself When Young; and undeniably the autobiographical impetus is at times so unassimilated that the emotional tone is wrenched out of all proportion; but the author has written with such élan, and at the same time with such sincerity, that he seldom falls into the artificial manner which marks the other book. *Look Homeward, Angel* is an extended oxymoron: a natural declamation.

[2] *Cf. Ulysses,* p. 732 (1st ed., 1922): ". . . and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes."

In spite of its six-hundred-odd pages, the book as it stands has been generously cut. This I think is unfortunate. I do not know the content of the deleted passages, but I take it that their inclusion would have cleared up much in the book that seems incoherent and dangling. For example: the story begins with the picturesque figure of Oliver Gant, the father of Eugene and Ben. He is described in considerable detail, his character and his actions are given a portentous prominence, and throughout the first half of the book he is the centre of interest. But later, as more and more attention is given to his children, Gant fades: not gradually, but suddenly. It is almost as if Mr. Wolfe had forgotten him entirely. Thereafter he pops back into the narrative at infrequent intervals, but his appearances are never significant; after the first splendid delineation, the history of Gant is a text full of lacunæ. I cannot help but think that this apparent awkwardness, together with many other inconsistencies, is the result of scissoring. If the book had to be cut (as a matter of fact, it is a third too long still), there are innumerable episodes of minor or irrelevant interest, whose excision would have done less harm.

Apart from these flaws, which are possibly editorial, *Look Homeward, Angel* suffers somewhat from two venial shortcomings of its author: Mr. Wolfe is far too discursive; and Mr. Wolfe is too easily led by his emotion. The latter fault is the more serious. It spoils most of the University episodes, for the reader is uncomfortably aware that here Eugene is not Eugene but, *pro tempore*, the author himself, too intent upon paying off old scores to remember his balance. The emotion is so strong that the tone of these passages disintegrates into one of savage personal invective; the unity of the plot is interrupted, the illusion destroyed. At no time, however, does Mr. Wolfe err so blatantly as does Mr. Richard Aldington, say, in the opening chapters of *Death of a Hero*, where the intensity of the latter's conviction leads him into an exhibition of self-indulgent animus which, for cheapness and general unpleasantness, is hard to match in reputable literature. And Mr. Aldington is a much more experienced writer than Mr. Wolfe.

Again, the style. If Mr. Faulkner is an exponent of atonality, Mr. Wolfe's writing is polyphonic. He cultivates, among others, the periodic style. Scattered through *Look Homeward, Angel* are rhapsodical lyrics of the most daring kind: daring, because in writing of this sort the pitch is necessarily so precarious that one is constantly apprehensive

lest the exaltation collapse; the rhetoric go over into bombast. It is Mr. Wolfe's élan that sustains him. It would be easy to rant, easy to fall into the snare of Paterine "beauty"; but the touch is firm, the manner impeccable, lovely. Not even in the mystical passages which close the book is there the least fogging, the least vagueness. And he ends with a cadence of many voices, where, though the poignant modulation is of our day, one is inevitably aware of the tremendous beat of the great English prose:

> And day came, and the song of waking birds, and the Square, bathed in the young pearl light of morning. And a wind stirred lightly in the Square, and, as he looked, Ben, like a fume of smoke, was melted into dawn.
>
> And the angels on Gant's porch were frozen in hard marble silence, and at a distance life awoke, and there was a rattle of lean wheels, a slow clangour of shod hoofs. And he heard the whistle wail along the river.
>
> Yet, as he stood for the last time by the angels of his father's porch, it seemed as if the Square already were far and lost; or, I should say, he was like a man who stands upon a hill above the town he has left, yet does not say "The town is near," but turns his eyes upon the distant soaring ranges.

Is this only "fine writing"? A reviewer for a British magazine points out the fact that the contemporary "simple style" is quite as dangerous as the grand style which it supplanted. Anderson and Hemingway illustrate this. Anderson's later books, he observes,

> seem each to be written for a more childlike public and with a greater detestation of every form of literary machinery, [and the reader] will see at once that the fear of rhetoric leads to pacific depths of bathos, to depths that have never been equalled by the banality of the old extravagant writers.

Hemingway's simplicity is of a different kind. It is intensely rhetorical. When it fails, as it often does, especially in the descriptive passages in *Farewell to Arms*, it fails for the same reason that *The Sound and the Fury* fails: the artifice stifles the emotion. The Cult of the Stark is perilous, and Mr. Wolfe has done well to avoid it. But he has not fallen into the other extreme. Though his prose is studied, the artifice is an integral part of the whole. His writing is not the "beautiful" expression of emotions; rather, it *is* the emotions. It is utterly unselfconscious.

The shadow of Joyce is heavy upon Mr. Faulkner and Mr. Wolfe, as, indeed, it is heavy upon us all. Directly or indirectly, we owe to *Ulysses* most of what is fine, as well as much that is false, in our new technic. Most of all we are indebted for the revival of interest in technic *per se*. The day of the Sententious Illiterates — the Ander-

sons, the Dreisers, the Lewises, and the Lawrences: ("It don't make no difference how you say a thing, so long as you got a thing to say") — is already part of last year's calendar. We know that in order to say anything, we must first of all learn to write. The instrument is too precious to abuse. And, whether we care to admit it or not, Joyce has been teaching us all over again its uses, old and new. Ulysses is still looking for a Telemachus.

DUDLEY FITTS

TECHNIQUE IN CRITICISM

PRACTICAL CRITICISM. A Study in Literary Judgment. *By I. A. Richards. New York. Harcourt, Brace and Company.* 1929. $4.00.

In this volume, Mr. Richards gives us a great many facts about thirteen poems in relation to a much larger number of students; he then proceeds to make his facts available for discussion by inventing and defining the terms of discussion. The labour is the greater because he has to use words already horribly vague, full of dead presences, from the flatulence of casual custom. How far this is contrary to ordinary practice should be made plain. He does not begin by telling us what poetry is about or what it is or what it must be or even what it has been. He shows us what kind of response people actually make to poetry, how as a rule that response is inadequate and why, and how that response may be improved. It is a question of getting at a poem in terms of itself rather than in the terms of a reader's self. It is a question of learning to read English. For the rest, after you have read a poem, actually known it, you must then learn how either to discard it as bad or choose it to be a part of yourself as good. You have only to remember, before the act of choice, that the reading of a good poem is a discipline only less arduous than its writing.

Now all of us are interested in what happens to us when we read poetry, and most of us are willing to talk about it. The common tone of such conversation is either frustration or superficiality. We either do not understand one another's terms or we do not understand the substance of discussion. We commonly take our disparity tacitly for granted and go on talking as if we were unanimous—in the hope that by deceiving ourselves we should instruct our interlocutors. We should do better if in the beginning we avowed and limited our disparity. Terms would of necessity become common, unanimity approximate; because we should discover what we were disagreeing about and so find ground for agreement. Such a beginning would be mainly occupied with the collection of data and the discussion of words. We should make each of us small dictionaries of our own, where definition was knowledge achieved; and we should try to use the same words as our friends.

In the particular field of poetry, Mr. Richards is making such a dictionary, and it is in this sense that his notions of criticism are practical. We can all use his words; and many of them we could not use nearly so well until he defined them — for example, there is the fourfold definition of the word "meaning." The purpose of his special dictionary is to aid the understanding of the larger dictionary of words as used in poetry. Mr. Richards puts the matter concisely. "The understanding of speech is an art which we are supposed to acquire chiefly by the light of nature — through the operation of sundry instincts—and to perfect by the dint of practice. . . . That in most cases it remains very imperfect indeed is the principal contention of this book. . . . All we can say is that the masters of life — the greater poets — sometimes seem to show such an understanding and control of language that we cannot imagine a further perfection." He goes on to say that our understanding of language can be improved, and that it must be improved if we are to have any understanding of life itself. Elsewhere, he says: "There is no gap between our everyday emotional life and the material of poetry. The verbal expression of this life, at its finest, is forced to use the technique of poetry; that is the only essential difference. We cannot avoid the material of poetry. If we do not live in consonance with good poetry, we must live in consonance with bad poetry. And, in fact, the idle hours of most lives are filled with reveries that are simply bad poetry."

The documentary parts of Mr. Richards' work, which cannot be rehearsed in brief, amply prove his point. The categories of terms and concepts with which he supplements his data have an extraordinary importance to the critic, the plain reader, and the educator. We are here concerned with the critic and must neglect the other aspects. Even if we object to the definitions Mr. Richards advances, still, such is their importance, that our objections, to be valid, must take the form of collaboration. We may wish to modify, to rearrange. We may discern more in a term or less than Mr. Richards makes explicit. At least we must admit that Mr. Richards has made the terms freshly and definitely available to contemporary material. We can use the terms on any poetry we choose, and we will know in what sense we are using each term. No term is restricted by Mr. Richards to any poem or to any particular class of poem: that is, while

his observations spring from particulars, they are invariably so expressed as to command general use.

We may admit the argument, advanced, for example, by Allen Tate that Mr. Richards is no literary critic in the traditional sense. We do not come from him stuffed with judgment and caricature upon Shakespeare and Dante; but we are better prepared to make our own judgments. Mr. Richards' works are a preparatory school to good criticism, just as the dictionary is to good writing. Though Mr. Tate reprehend it, nevertheless a sound laboratory technique is an excellent aid to the understanding of poetry and its criticism. Whether such a technique can be taught is another matter; that may be Mr. Richards' vainglory. But some may be tempted to teach themselves by the ideal he envisages.

R. P. Blackmur

RECENT VERSE

SELECTED POEMS OF CONRAD AIKEN. *By Conrad Aiken. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1929. $3.00.

O CITY, CITIES! *By R. Ellsworth Larsson. New York. Payson & Clarke, Ltd.* 1929. $2.50.

HIGH FALCON. *By Leonie Adams. New York. John Day Company.* $2.50.

When there appear the collected or selected poems of a mature poet, the temptation to "place" him with respect to his contemporaries is very great. One realizes, of course, that the attempt is very dangerous, but it may conceivably be illuminating. The best American poets of Mr. Aiken's generation, it should be fairly safe by now to say, are Robert Frost (if his age does not disqualify him), W. C. Williams, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, Mina Loy, Archibald MacLeish, John Crowe Ransom, Wallace Stevens, and possibly H. D. It is doubtful if any one of these is a poet of the very first order if we look for the qualities that Arnold found or thought he found in Wordsworth (and Wordsworth was, according to Arnold, only of the second order) or that one today can find easily enough in Arnold; but Mr. Frost in six or eight of the lyrics in *West-Running Brook* will come fairly near the mark, in spite of his deliberate (and not wholly successful) effort to evade certain themes that Arnold would have insisted on his mastering (see his shockingly timid remarks in the lyric called "The Times Table"); and Dr. Williams will come at least as near in a dozen or more scattered lyrics, in spite of the various criteria of good poetry that he has endeavored at different times to establish, which would, if applied to his own best poems, render them a little or no worth. Whatever the spiritual limitations of any of this list of writers, however, they have shown themselves here and there to be, all of them, first rate stylists. The question arises whether Mr. Aiken is their equal as a stylist; it is my opinion that he is not.

Mr. Aiken's debt to Mr. Eliot has been over-estimated; it really amounts to little or nothing. Mr. Eliot's early work, which is supposed to have exerted the influence, employs a line that is based on the

standard iambic pentameter; Mr. Aiken's line varies, but it is almost never that. The only resemblance that I can discover is the similar tendency to wandering rhymes (very common in all of the late French symbolists, from Laforgue to Vielé-Griffin); and in *Senlin* Mr. Aiken made his protagonist philosophize while combing his hair. Like Mr. Eliot, Mr. Aiken has used a kind of stream-of-consciousness method, and like him also has endeavored through the use of that method to deal rather extensively with the spiritual difficulties and the concrete aspects of our period. *The Waste Land* lacks form; Mr. Aiken's long poems in a sense achieve form or at least cohesion — that is, they are not obviously falling apart from line to line. But if one examines them carefully, it is fairly evident that the lines cohere not because they have any common intention or direction, but because they have no intention or direction; there is nothing to force them apart, no group of identities for the poet to weld together. Mr. Aiken has practically no sense of the integrity of the line; Mr. Eliot, whatever his weaknesses, has that sense as a critic, though he often fails to rise to it as a poet, and, when he does rise to it, often fails to get beyond it. If one performs the experiment of opening Mr. Aiken's book at random to two or three passages in any of the long poems or in nearly any of the short ones, one can scarcely help being struck by the almost exact similarity of his work at every point. The following passage is from page nine, *The Jig of Forslin*:

> I heard a story once of one who murdered,
> For what I cannot remember; but he murdered.
> With a knife's greedy edge, or with white hands —
> What does it matter? The swift deed was done . . .
> That was a sombre sea-pool to explore —
> Strange things are on that floor.
>
> And once, the music I was listening to
> Suddenly opened, like a luminous book,
> To one bright page that told of a strange thing:
> A man stepped out in the purple of an arc-light,
> A man I knew — I knew him well —
> And because the harlot he loved had jilted him,
> He held his breath and died.

This is from a short poem on page 301:

> And already the minutes, the hours, the days,
> Separate thoughts and separate ways,
> Fall whitely and silently and slowly between us,
> Fall between us like phantasmal rain and snow.

And we, who were thrust for an instant so sharply
together,
Under changing skies to alien destinies go.

Melody heard in the midnight on the wind —
Orange poppy of fire seen in a dream —
Vainly I try to keep you. How the sky,
A great blue wind, with a gigantic laugh,
Scorns us apart like chaff.
Like a bird blown to sea am I.

Mr. Aiken's heroes commit murder to appropriate music, fall from skyscrapers, or wander in the lamplight in the rain (to steal a cadence from him) in exactly the same frame of mind and in the same colorless vocabulary. Each act (an almost infinite variety of disconnected and meaningless acts, a kind of cosmic drift or milky way of acts, in fact) passes before one; each is mentioned, but none is poetically realized. One cannot think of any one of Mr. Aiken's poems as a unit, but one can think only of his poetry as a vague and perpetual flux. His poems, like his lines, lack bounds. He achieves a momentary illusion of form by abandoning all claim to form; his poems move evenly, but they might just as well stop anywhere; they are simply a record of revery.

Mr. Aiken has expounded at one time or another theories of musical outline that I do not profess wholly to understand. Musical outline in a poem is, I imagine, if it becomes an isolated quality, a vice rather than a virtue. The kind of proportion that involves not only the sound of the lines, but the meanings and connotations of the words as words, of the lines as lines, and of the poem as a whole, is the sum total of poetic style, but it is a very complex thing. It may occur in poems as short as Mr. Frost's "Acquainted with the Night" or Dr. Williams' "To Waken an Old Lady." It will never be achieved by letting cadences run on indefinitely in a long sweeping wash of sound, for such sound will utterly swamp the other components. To achieve it one must be aware of and control a good many qualities at once. Excessive attention to one quality in art, as in other activities, usually indicates a rather general blindness and seldom results in the mastery even of that quality. Dr. Williams' meter, as pure meter, is incomparably better than Mr. Aiken's, and so is Mr. Frost's. Mr. Aiken's metrical effects are facile and uncontrolled; he succeeds perfectly in achieving second-rate effects that would be mussed up badly by a

more critical, even if more creative, mind, such as, say Mr. Eliot's. Swinburne sins the same way, but does not go so far; also his positive virtues are more considerable. One could say the same of Ezra Pound. Aiken, Swinburne, and Pound achieve their varying degrees of success and their uniform smoothness, one suspects, because their respective critical visions are not much clearer than their creative. Mr. Eliot is not so lucky.

Mr. Aiken's place, then, I imagine, is very likely to be in that fringe of contemporary poets who have achieved a kind of frail brilliance through the exaggeration and limited mastery of some one quality. His best poem is "Priapus and the Pool." It is short, and, though it is a bit diffuse, it says at least as much as any of his long pieces. The cadences are terser and better orchestrated than in anything else he has done; his meter, at least, in this poem, has form — one has a feeling that it is doing fairly definite and interesting things, and one can forecast the arrival of the end before one gets there. The poem deserves a respectable place beside the *Blue Symphony* of John Gould Fletcher, a poet who regarded poetry and music as about the same thing and who thought, for a time, that by naming and suggesting colors in a regulated series one could create a type of music; and beside the "Patterns" and one or two late poems by Amy Lowell, whose nervous preoccupation with leaves and sunlight occasionally took on a brittle charm. Mr. Aiken's place is less among the best poets of our time than among the most interesting poetic curiosities. If one is sceptical about the truth of this conclusion let him compare, say, any of Mr. Aiken's nocturnal reveries with Mr. Frost's "Acquainted with the Night"; the difference is the difference between a formless record of mere fact and a sharply limited and beautifully ordered poetic structure — limited as Arnold used the term, and not in the pejorative sense in which it is often used today, and, though ordered, none the less fearful and haunting — and, incidentally, a poetic structure of vastly more significance than has been so far admitted by any of Mr. Frost's old-guard admirers.

II

Mr. Larsson has metrical habits not unlike Mr. Aiken's; his line is of a different sort, but he uses it the same way. His matter is too seriously dependent upon the later Eliot, and his manner is some-

what dependent upon Cummings. He does to Eliot, however, more or less what the poets of the nineties did to Swinburne. Eliot's matter is no longer felt as something in any way real; it is accepted as a conventional confection. The rain and the rats in the attic become more or less equivalent to the flowers and the flames of sin. Even when Mr. Eliot borrows most profusely he seems to be aware of the reality of the vision of his sources; he is quite simply beaten by it. Mr. Larsson does not appear greatly afflicted by such an awareness of reality — the themes merely present interesting possibilities for rearrangement. His meters are in a sense intricate, but only because, like Mr. Aiken's, they run on more or less indefinitely, not because they are genuinely subtle or difficult: the trick is mainly one of arresting, breaking, and impelling to slightly irregular overflow, the iambic pentameter line, and it is a trick that it is harder to avoid than to indulge in, especially when one is throwing in irregular rhymes. Mr. Larsson, like Mr. Aiken, and like a good many other contemporaries who are popularly supposed to be adroit stylists, is in a state of arrested expertness. He is elaborating on effects that the few first-rate stylists of our time have learned through hard work to avoid entirely. The poems, like or even more than Mr. Aiken's, lack individual identity, though Mr. Larsson has plenty of personality himself — more, in fact, than does Mr. Aiken. There is no one poem in the book as good as "Priapus and the Pool"; but there are not two consecutive lines in Mr. Aiken as good as these from Mr. Larsson:

> Sun in an arc
> and summer dead:
> the year
> spends itself in windiness and din

That is perhaps as comprehensive a comment as one could make on both books; but at odd moments, anyway, Mr. Larsson really makes the most of something he has observed — he has the capacity to learn how to write. Whether he has the inclination remains to be seen.

III

Miss Adams' first volume, *Those Not Elect*, failed, for whatever reasons, to interest me; her second volume interests me a great deal, partly because it contains at least five brilliantly executed poems and a number of fine passages, and partly because it contains a number of

weaknesses, at least several of which are rather common among the better writers of Miss Adams' generation and are in danger of becoming more common. I shall take advantage of the critic's prerogative and begin with the vices.

Two of the faults most common in her work, as well as most irritating, though perhaps not most profoundly important, are a persistent use of certain forms of ambiguous syntax, chiefly the dangling participle and the pronoun of uncertain reference, a use which results in an obscurity in no wise organic to the feeling and hence definitely bad; and a tendency to dilute and expand certain poems ("Windy Way" is one of the worst examples) with pretty literary turns and phrases which bear much the same relationship to poetry that scales bear to music.

More important is her preoccupation with, and exaggeration of the significance of, the feelings attendant upon the fringe of sleep; these feelings are sometimes genuinely curious, but only the most unbridled mysticism can imbue them with any vast amount of meaning. The tendency to take them too seriously is indicative of a tendency to find profundity in the strange simply because it is strange, and this, though it has been a common poetic vice for at least a hundred and fifty years, is decidedly uncritical and is bound to be in one degree or another disastrous to poetry. It is much more difficult to face experience on one's feet and with one's eyes open than in any other condition, and it is hence vastly more necessary that one endeavor to give it order while in this condition.

Miss Adams' mysticism shows itself in another way in two of her most perfectly executed songs, "Time and Spirit," and "The Mount," as well as in a few less perfect pieces. The feeling, the experience, in these poems involves certain ideas which most readers, I imagine, will have a hard time taking seriously, and it involves these ideas not by rejecting them nor by regarding them sceptically, but by accepting them with a certain fervor. The reader, to experience the poems, must likewise accept them; but as the acceptance in most cases can be no more than extremely temporary, the poems become momentary luxuries, indulgences, and are scarcely spiritual necessities. This sort of easy indulgence, of facile escape from the real difficulties of achieving spiritual mastery, is altogether too common in modern poetry. Mr. Hart Crane is another serious sinner on this score, and

one of the greatest is Mr. Yeats, who exhibits an inordinate capacity for temporarily solving the riddle of life in magnificently written lines, his solution, frequently being something no more considerable than a handful of automatic letters, and the grandeur of his rhetoric on such an occasion leaving the reader dumfounded.

Finally, there are probably not over a dozen poems in the book that are not packed with echoes, general and specific, from Yeats. Mr. Yeats, though he has written poems that are almost certainly of a major order, has a very dangerous habit of striking histrionically noble attitudes when he finds himself in the face of situations that are genuinely hard to understand; such attitudes are at best but very rough estimates of the situations and a very rough substitute for the humble and careful exactness of Hardy or of Baudelaire. They are, being somewhat ready-made and standardized, the most easily imitated aspect of his work; and they are particularly tempting to a generation whose more intelligent members are struggling desperately to reassert the dignity and moral values lost by their predecessors. There is every reason to believe at the present moment that Mr. Yeats may exert as funest an influence in the next five or six years as did Mr. Eliot in the last, and one that may be recognized and abandoned more slowly, for appearing to be something it is not. His weaker moments and methods offer too facile an escape from the too facile collapse of Mr. Eliot: they offer escape via a stylistic formula rather than intellectual and moral effort and hence can lead ultimately only to another collapse or to poetry that, though apparently sustained, is devoid of genuine meaning. They add intellectual unsoundness to the emotional unsoundness of Mr. Eliot, or rather they seem to conceal the latter under the former.

For evidence of this danger one need only examine recent work, not only by Miss Adams, but by Edmund Wilson, Raymond Holden, and Robert Penn Warren, to mention no more, all of them writers of considerable ability. These poets have not sold their souls to Mr. Yeats, but they have all been tempted, and the varying degrees to which the temptation has moved them are indicative of a very real peril.

The most perfectly executed poems, in addition to "Time and Spirit," and "The Mount," are "Country Summer," "Song from a Country Fair," and "The Figurehead," and to these three one can

take, I think, very little exception, whether in the matter of style or of conception. The first is a landscape and nothing more, but is a particularly rich and lovely one; the second one is, in superficial appearance, a kind of marginal note, but it possesses very curious and almost terrifying implications; the third, possibly the finest of all, I offer for the reader's consideration:

> This that is washed with weed and pebblestone
> Curved once a dolphin's length before the prow,
> And I who read the land to which we bore
> In its grave eyes, question my idol now,
> What cold and marvelous fancy it may keep,
> Since the salt terror swept us from our course,
> Or if a wisdom later than the storm,
> For old green ocean's tinctured it so deep;
> And with some reason to me on this strand
> The waves, the ceremonial waves have come
> And stooped their barbaric heads, and all spread out
> Their lovely arms before them, and are gone,
> Leaving their murderous tribute on the sand.

There is not only, here, extraordinary beauty of visual imagery, but there is a kind of beauty that is possibly more profound and which it is certainly harder to achieve: the fourth line, for instance, especially as it concentrates in its second half, is one of the most deeply moving lines in the poem, and the emotion is not in the least illusory, though it is impossible, perhaps, to give objectively satisfactory reasons for it — it is something in the cadence and it is something more than that.

YVOR WINTERS